PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

# GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

## Small garden special

Maximal style in minimal space

HOW TO MAKE AN

## English flower garden

Planting ideas from Gravetye Manor

**PERFECT PLANTS FOR AUGUST**

9 OF THE BEST

## outdoor showers

## American dream

Beautiful, sustainable design on the East Coast

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# Editor's letter

In this issue of *Gardens Illustrated* we consider space. We have included the best small gardens that we have seen this year, each designed to optimise the available room in a small plot. From an urban sanctuary with a completely green palette designed by Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg to a tranquil gravel garden, there is plenty to inspire.

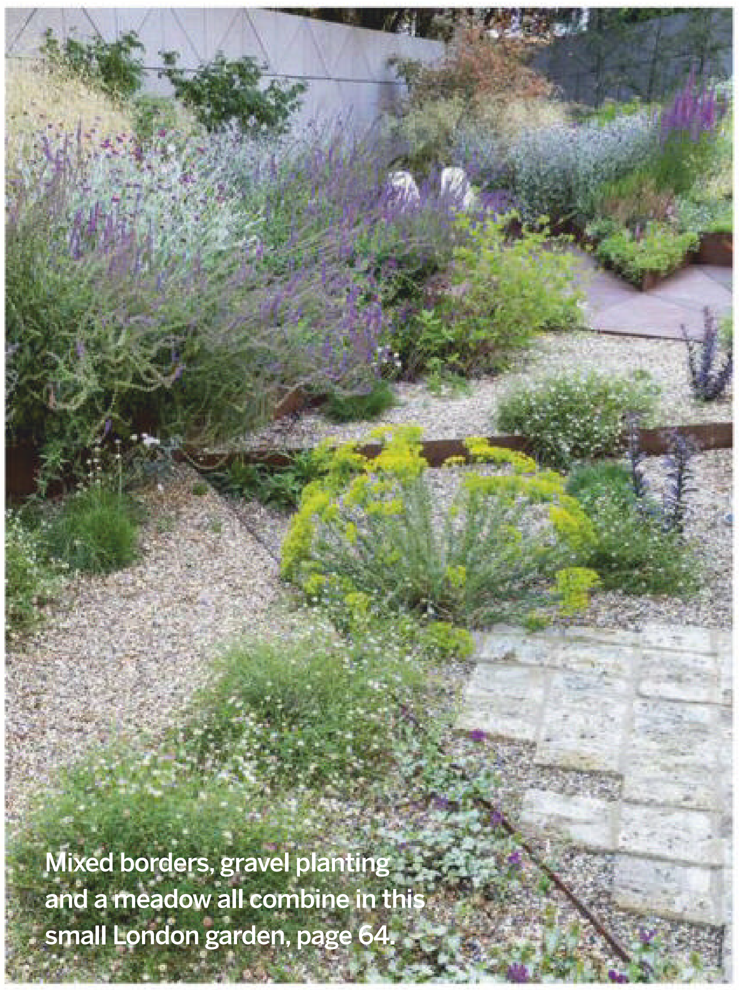
In East Sussex is the garden of a contemporary art collector that has been thoughtfully landscaped around its art. Trees including *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Salix alba* have been chosen expressly to attract bees, and a meadow in the form of a wildflower labyrinth offers opportunities to walk through without trampling the flowers. It is a space in which to become immersed as much as to view.

On page 52 Tom Coward, head gardener at Gravetye Manor, shares three long-season planting ideas for flower gardens using shrubs, perennials, bulbs and annuals. In keeping with William Robinson, Gravetye's visionary creator, the flower garden at Gravetye is constantly changing and Tom will also be sharing his insights into dynamic seasonal planning and planting ideas in the first of a new series of live and interactive *Gardens Illustrated* masterclasses, online on 2 September at 6pm. I do hope you will be able to join us. Visit gardensillustrated.com/masterclass for details.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



Mixed borders, gravel planting and a meadow all combine in this small London garden, page 64.

MARIANNE MAJERUS

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AUGUST 2020

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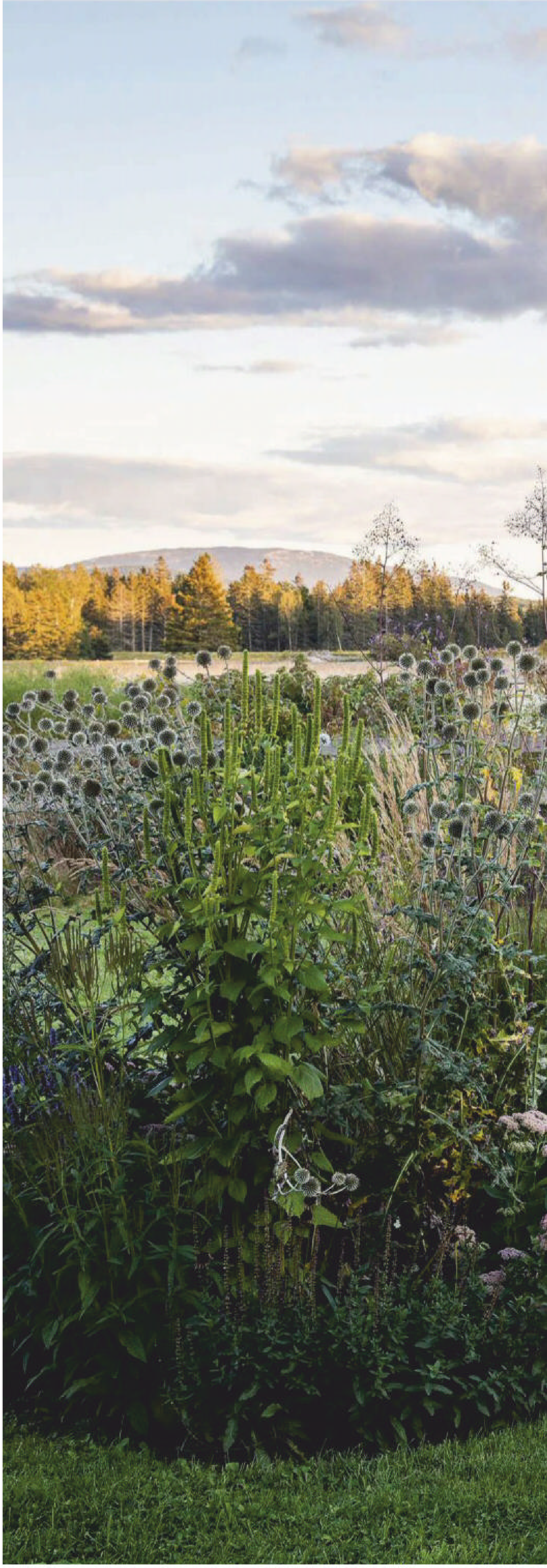

CLAIRE TAKACS

Low-input planting in a New England garden, page 78.

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## *EVENTS AND OFFERS*

- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 22

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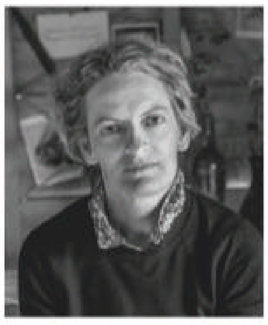
# Contributors

**Ray Cox**
Ray photographs the gardens of Balker Farmhouse in Scotland, page 44. *"I had these on my 'gardens to investigate' list for a while but wasn't expecting such striking planting."*


HOWARD SOOLEY

**Kendra Wilson**
Kendra visits a beautifully designed small London garden, page 60. *"Harris Bugg's approach to this urban front and back garden is a masterclass in the importance of quality in detail."*

**Tom Coward**
Tom shares the secrets of Gravetye's borders, page 52. *"Flower borders can be a challenge towards the end of summer, but with good planning this can be a climax of colour before autumn arrives."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

**James Basson**
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

**Fergus Garrett**
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

**Anna Pavord**
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

**Dan Pearson**
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

**Sarah Price**
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

# GARDENS
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# Dig in

## What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month

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Online platform Learning With Experts has teamed up with leading designer Tom Stuart-Smith to offer an exciting new course on designing and creating your dream country garden. Over the course of four modules you will learn the main principles of garden design, get an insight into Tom's own gardening philosophy, and learn how to achieve the right 'mood' for your garden as well as how to choose the best materials and features. The course has two learning options: the Expert option for £109 and the Peer option for £29. The former includes four weeks of tutor access, four assignments and a certificate of completion, all monitored, marked and personally approved for you by Tom. You can start the course now at **learningwithexperts.com**

# News

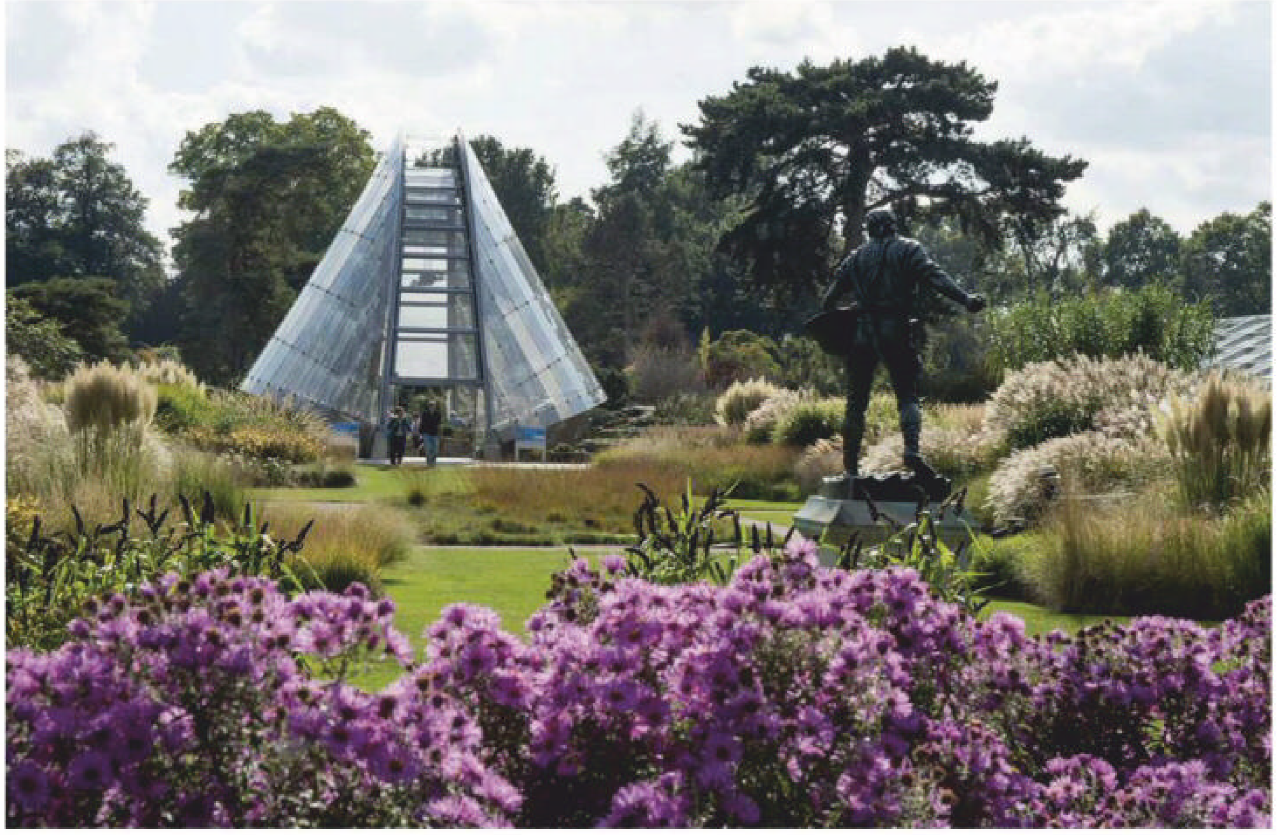
COMPILED BY KATIE DUTTON

## Seasonal style

*Step out in French style with a pair of Le Chameau women's wellies. The new Iris collection is inspired by nature and has a subtle palette, including these dusky blue (bleu clair) and cheerful pink (rose) shades. Handcrafted, the boots are lightweight but have a sturdy sole and more than 90 per cent of each boot is made from sustainable rubber. They've even received the royal seal of approval, with the Duchesses of Cambridge and Sussex both calling themselves fans. The boots cost £100, from* ***lechameau.com***

## Rosy forecast

If you are thinking of planting a bare-root rose this autumn, you may want to consider the British Association of Rose Breeders' newly crowned rose of 2021, *Rosa* Belle de Jour (= 'Deljaupar'), a Floribunda rose from the French breeder Delbard. This sunny rose has double flowers on top of sturdy stems and works well in borders, beds and containers. It has distinct, sweet-smelling notes of vanilla and apricot, and has been noted for its excellent disease resistance. Belle de Jour is available to pre-order as a bare root from Trevor White Roses for £12.95. **trevorwhiteroses.co.uk**



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### Around the world in a day

You may not have been able to get away this summer, but at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, you can satisfy at least part of your wanderlust with a trip around the world's flora. With its world-famous glasshouses now open once again, you can enjoy the sights and smells of six continents in the course of a day, from flowers found on snowy mountainsides in the Alpine House (shown above) to tropical blooms in the Palm House. Fans of the Netflix show *The Big Flower Fight* should also keep an eye out for a bespoke, travel-themed botanical sculpture, designed by the show's winning duo, which is set to go on display this month. All visitors, including members, need to pre-book their visit. **kew.org**

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Hugo and Fran Warner *Kent*

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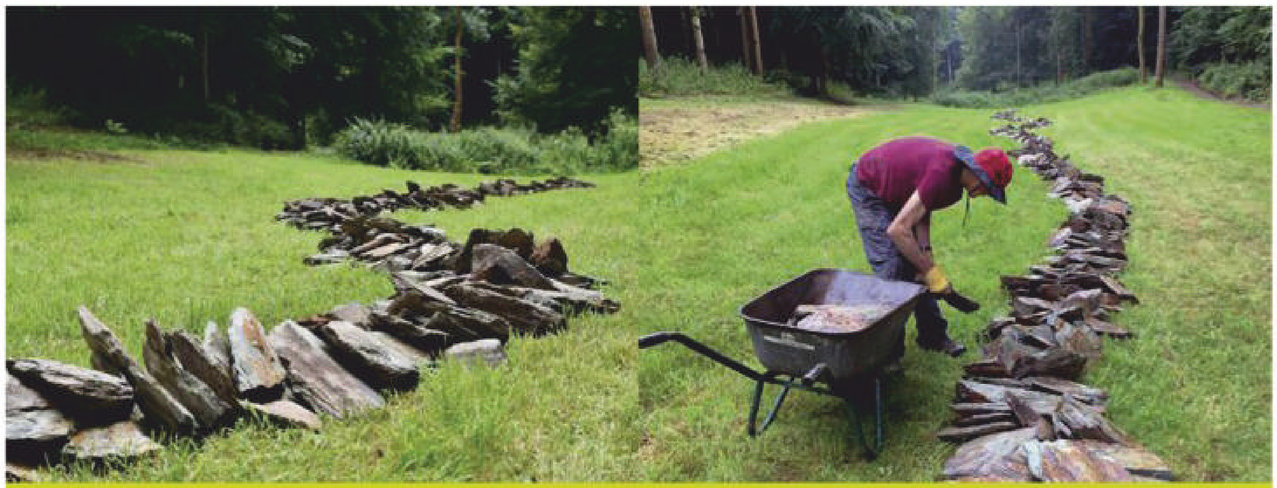
## Back on show

With most garden shows cancelled over the summer we've had to make do with our own garden blooms. That is set to change thanks to the upcoming Belvoir Castle Flower & Garden Show at the Leicestershire castle over the weekend of 5-6 September. Get plant inspiration from specialist plant growers, border displays and show gardens all in the stunning 'Capability' Brown parkland. A panel of expert horticulturists will also be on hand to answer gardening questions and a whole host of big names from the gardening world will be speaking. Find out more at **belvoircastle.com**



## Natural curves

Celebrated artist Richard Long has created a new sculpture that snakes through the Georgian Landscape Garden at Hestercombe Gallery in Somerset. Titled *Jackdaw Line*, the work is inspired by a love and celebration of the natural world, and is made using Morte Slate, with stone sourced from a nearby quarry. It's part of *Bampfylde 300*, a year-long celebration of the life and work of Hestercombe's former owner, the 18th-century painter and garden designer Coplestone Warre Bampfylde. The Gardens and Gallery are open Wednesday to Sunday, but you must pre-book your slot at **hestercombe.com**

SUMMER
SEASONAL FORAGING

## Nature's larder

*Artist Isla Middleton has created a new range of beautiful and intricate seasonal foraging posters, designed to inspire and familiarise people with the wild plants we can forage on our doorsteps. Featuring leaves, berries, fruits and flowers, all of which are numbered and named at the foot of the print for easy reference, the lino-cut prints are made using vegetable-based, vegan inks on 100 per cent recycled and textured paper. Available in three seasonal designs – Spring, Summer and Autumn – the prints cost £18 each or £45 for all three.* ***islamiddleton.co.uk***

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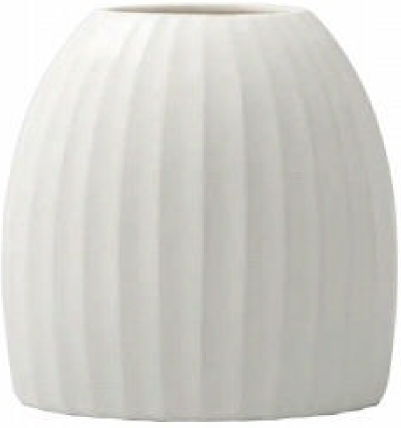

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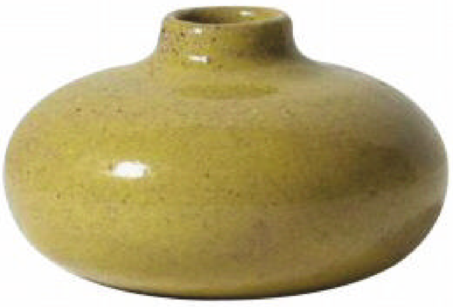

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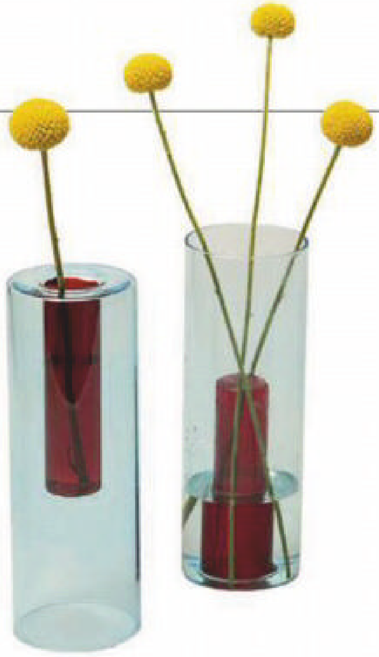

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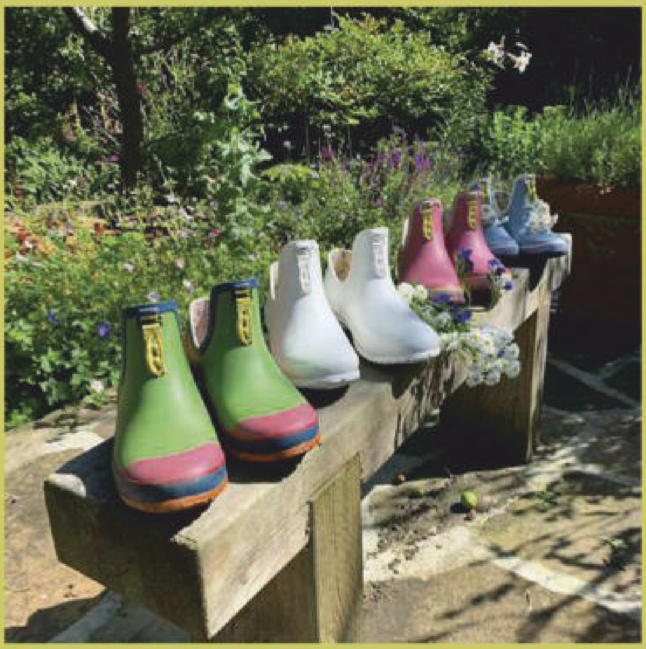

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## For small gardens

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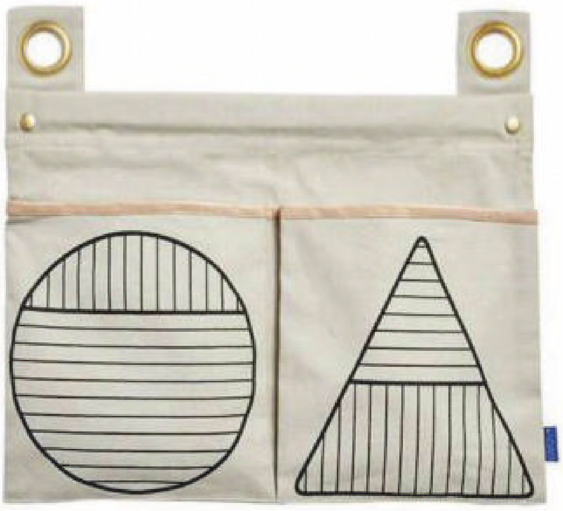

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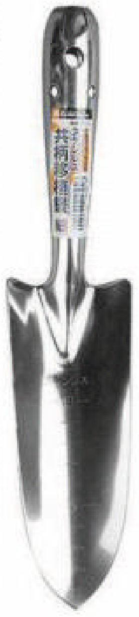

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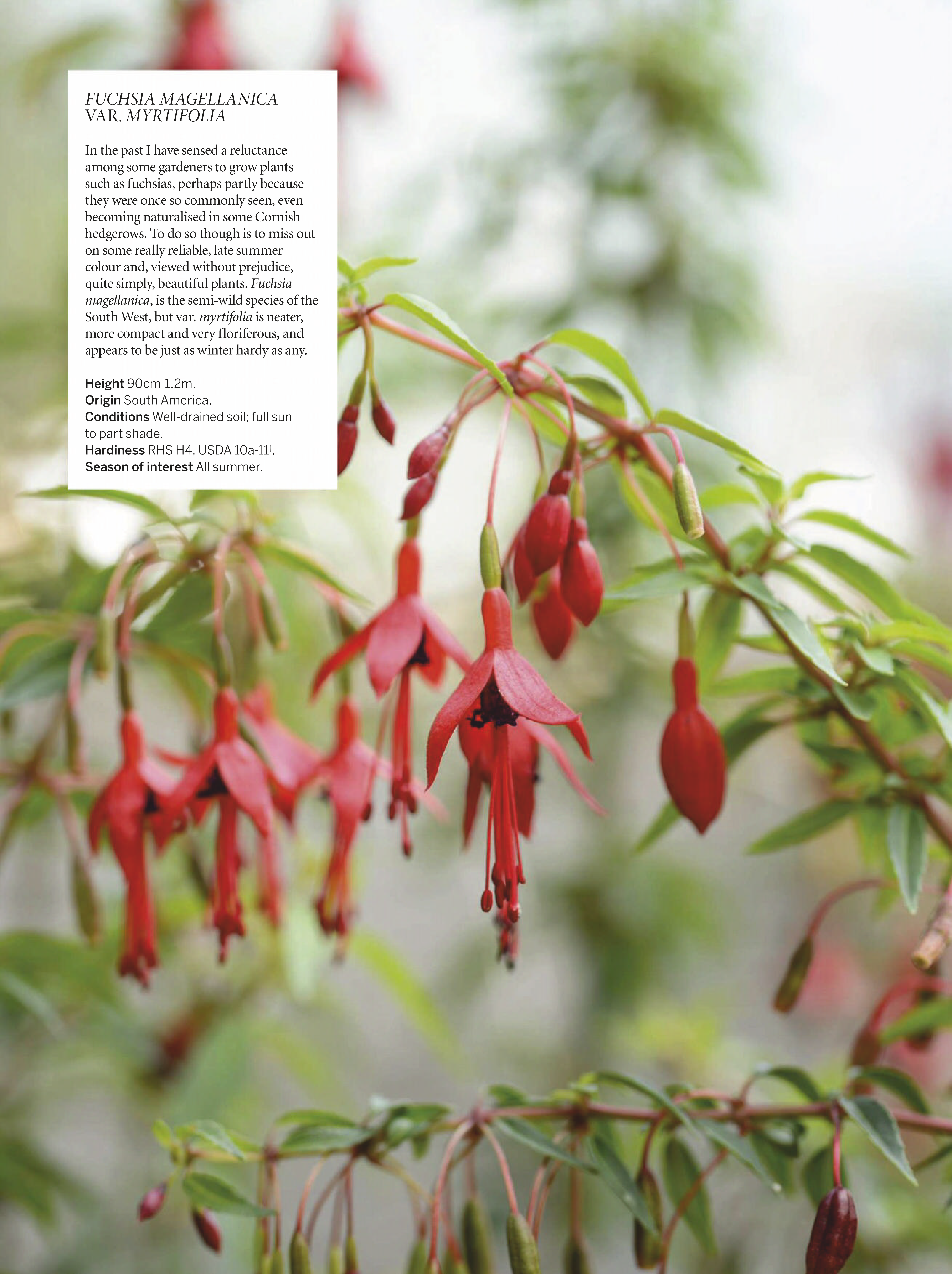
Learn Piet Oudolf's garden design secrets directly from Piet and long-time collaborator Dr Noel Kingsbury

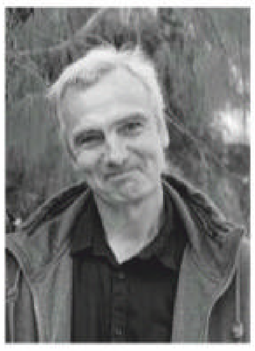
Learn the philosophy behind one of the greatest minds in garden design, Tom Stuart-Smith



## *FUCHSIA MAGELLANICA* VAR. *MYRTIFOLIA*

In the past I have sensed a reluctance among some gardeners to grow plants such as fuchsias, perhaps partly because they were once so commonly seen, even becoming naturalised in some Cornish hedgerows. To do so though is to miss out on some really reliable, late summer colour and, viewed without prejudice, quite simply, beautiful plants. *Fuchsia magellanica*, is the semi-wild species of the South West, but var. *myrtifolia* is neater, more compact and very floriferous, and appears to be just as winter hardy as any.

**Height** 90cm-1.2m.
**Origin** South America.
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H4, USDA 10a-11[†].
**Season of interest** All summer.



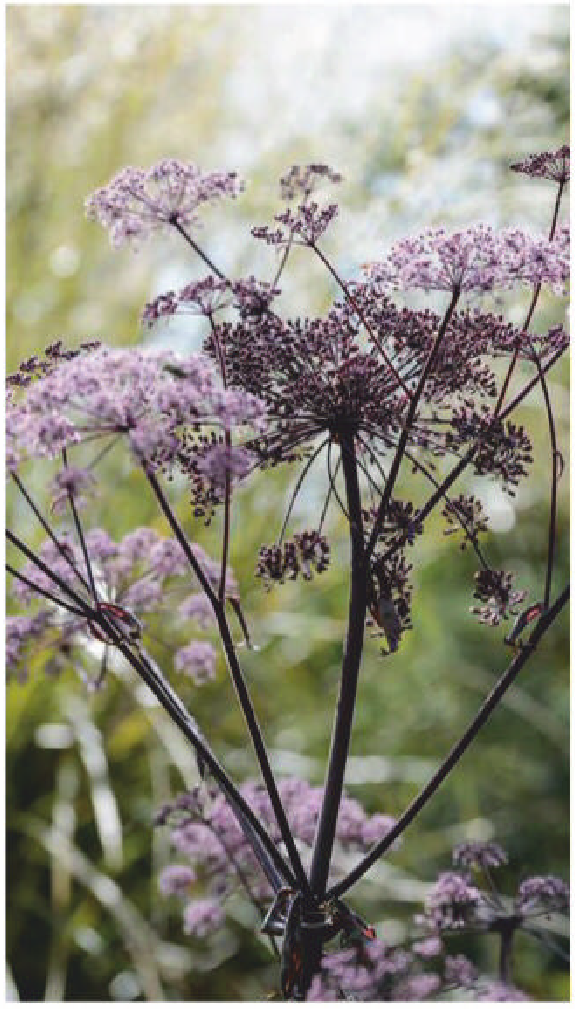
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

# August plants

With summer at its peak, Keith takes pleasure in the colour provided by a long-flowering fuchsia and agapanthus and in the chocolate scent of a dark dahlia

WORDS KEITH WILEY PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

**Keith Wiley**
runs Wildside
nursery in Devon
**wileyatwildside.com**



## *ANGELICA SYLVESTRIS* 'PURPUREA'

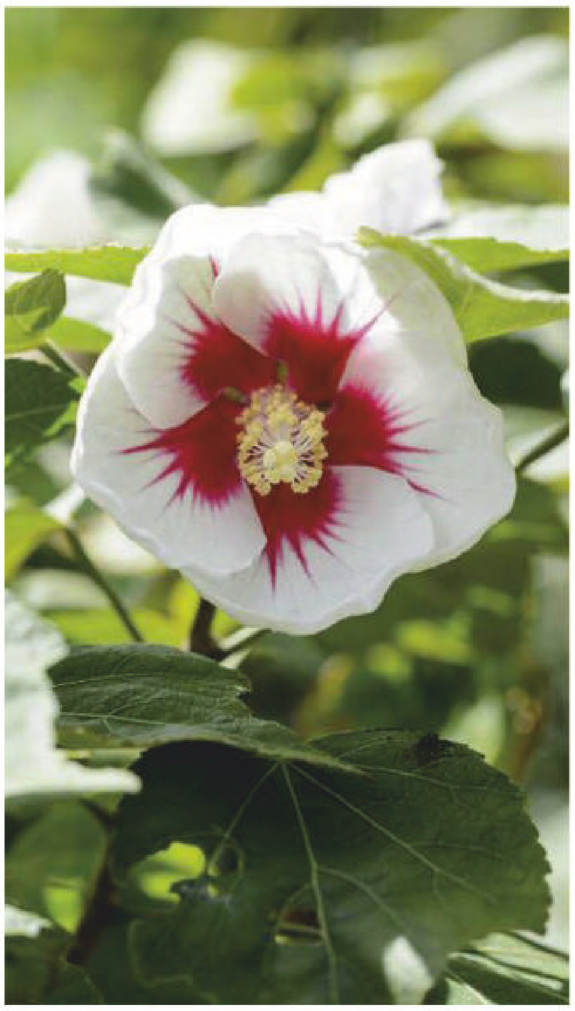
The shape and form of umbellifers is generally reminiscent of the cow parsley of UK hedgerows, and using this plant form in our gardens lends our plantings a naturalistic element. This purple-leaved cultivar of the UK's native wild angelica is less vigorous than its green counterpart and is consequently less vigorous. Both are biennial or short-lived perennials, but will willingly self-seed. The purple form will only throw a percentage of its seedlings as purple, and left unchecked the vast majority will soon be predominantly green, so I remove green seedlings.

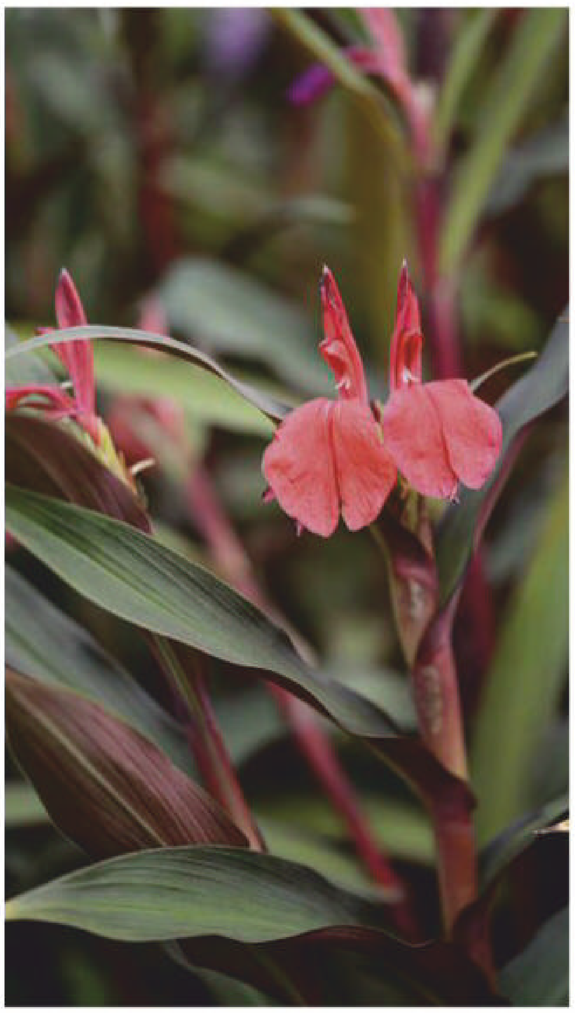
**Height** 90cm-1.2m.
**Origin** Garden (species UK native).
**Conditions** Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
**Conditions** RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
**Season of interest** Summer.

## *HIBISCUS SINOSYRIACUS* 'AUTUMN SURPRISE'

Maybe I don't get out as much as I used to, but are there fewer rose of Sharon or tree hollyhock, *Hibiscus syriacus*, in our front gardens now? I've never been a great fan of this plant anyway, despite its obvious floral attractions, primarily I think because of its stiffly, vase-shaped habit that I find hard to incorporate in a naturalistic style. I have no such problems with this much rarer Chinese species that has a more graceful, open habit and, in late summer, fabulously exotic large flowers, reminiscent of those seen in the Caribbean or Mediterranean.

**Height** 1.5-2m.
**Origin** Garden (species China).
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.
**Season of interest** Late summer.





## *ROSCOEA PURPUREA* 'IMPERIAL RED'

Offering good foliage, this plant also flowers for about six weeks and reaches a height that can suit almost any garden, making it worthy of serious consideration. Most *Roscoea purpurea* have green foliage and flowers in shades of lilac or purple, but by selective hybridising, we have managed to raise purple-foliaged plants with flowers from white through salmon to almost red. All resemble miniature sweetcorn plants in habit and shape and grow from tuberous roots that don't show above ground until late May. Good following on from spring-flowering bulbs.

**Height** 30-40cm.
**Origin** Garden (species Himalayas).
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b.
**Season of interest** Late summer.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

## *AGAPANTHUS INAPERTUS* SUBSP. *HOLLANDII*

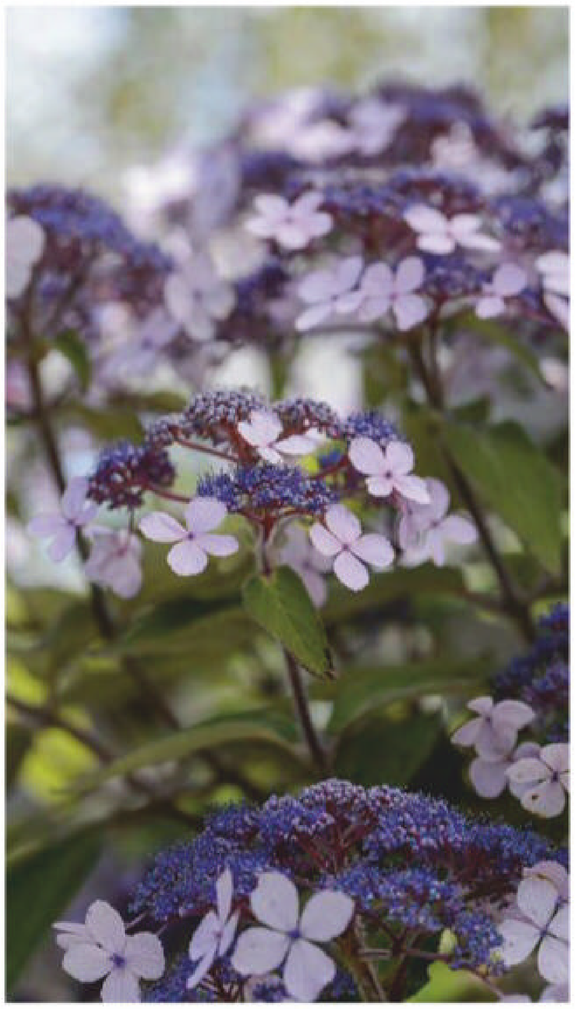
Agapanthus must be familiar to almost any gardener, and there are a bewildering number of species and cultivars available in varying shades of blue or white. I must admit I did catch the collecting bug and grow well over a 100 different types, varying not only in colour but in size from 25cm to 1.5m, and in flower form. This subspecies is one of the most reliable, in the middle of the height range, with good strong stems carrying the semi-pendulous flowers of a good mid blue. Summer without agapanthus, just wouldn't be summer for me.

**Height** 90cm-1.2m.
**Origin** South Africa.
**Conditions** Well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.
**Season of interest** Late summer.

## *IMPATIENS TINCTORIA*

I debated for some time whether or not I should include this plant as it doesn't really meet my criteria for what I consider a good habit. In the end, I couldn't resist those large, beautifully marked and very heavily scented flowers – and as a result I conveniently forgot its unremarkable foliage, which is worryingly similar to the Himalayan balsam that swamps so many river banks. Fortunately, despite appearances, there are no such problems with this species as I have never discovered a seedling offspring resulting from its projectile seedheads that are so beloved by children.

**Height** 1.5-2m.
**Origin** Uganda and Kenya.
**Conditions** Moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
**Season of interest** All summer.



## *HYDRANGEA ASPERA* VILLOSA GROUP

I have always known this plant as *Hydrangea villosa* Spinners form after the Hampshire garden of that name where I bought it. Peter Chappell, the then owner, thought the sterile ray florets were more pink than the normal form, and it certainly is very reliably floriferous with much narrower, thinner-textured leaves than *H. aspera*, under which banner the botanists have now assigned it. Given space and partial shade, it will make an open, rounded shrub with distinctive, silvery brown flaking trunks, very different to most lacecap hydrangeas.

**Height** 3m.
**Origin** China, northern India, Vietnam.
**Conditions** Moist, well-drained soil; part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
**Season of interest** Summer.

## Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best*

With August coinciding with the school holidays, it is now indelibly linked with thoughts of summer. At one time, however, it was considered to be the beginning of autumn and our gardens often have an autumnal feel to them at this time of year, especially if the weather has been dry and warm for any length of time. For many years, I assumed that the slight naturalness of seedheads and diminishing numbers of flowers was what most gardens were like in August, so it came as a bit of a shock when I did venture out to discover many small cottage gardens still bursting with colour.

Now I increasingly look to see what other gardeners are using to extend the flowering period in their plots. Fuchsias are brilliant for this, and now that winters appear to be getting milder, there are many species and cultivars that can be left outdoors, albeit with an extra mulch in colder areas. Normally in August, the British Fuchsia Society (thebfs.org.uk) would hold several shows around the UK, but as shows are still likely to be off limits this year, a visit to the Fuchsia Centre at **Thornton Nurseries** in Leicestershire may be in order. Day trips to any specialist nursery have always been a favourite of mine, especially with a nearly empty car, and this would fit the bill. Reservoir Road, Thornton, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 1AN. Tel 01530 230331, thornton-nurseries.co.uk

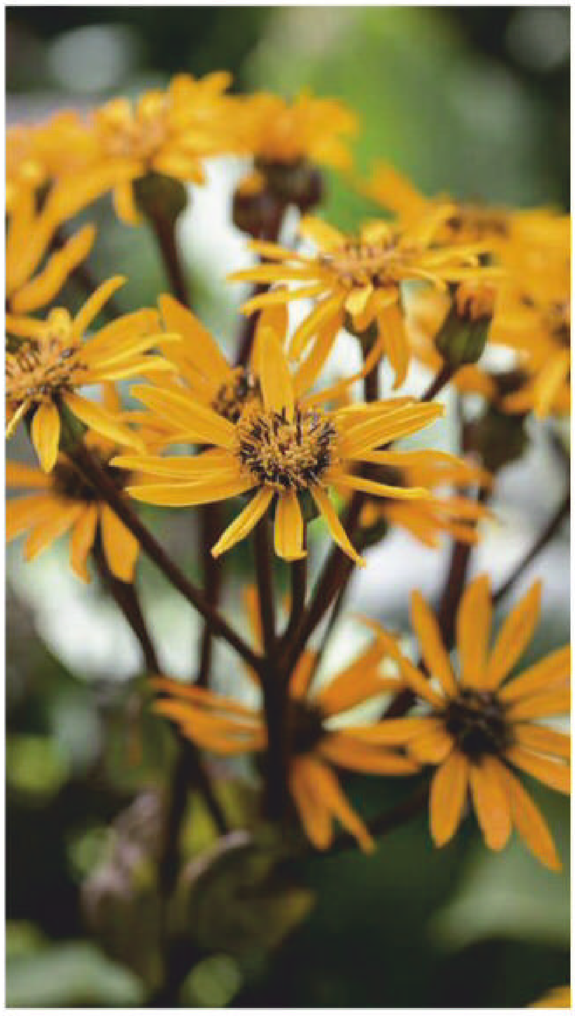
In North Wales, the award-winning nursery **Roualeyn Nursery** also

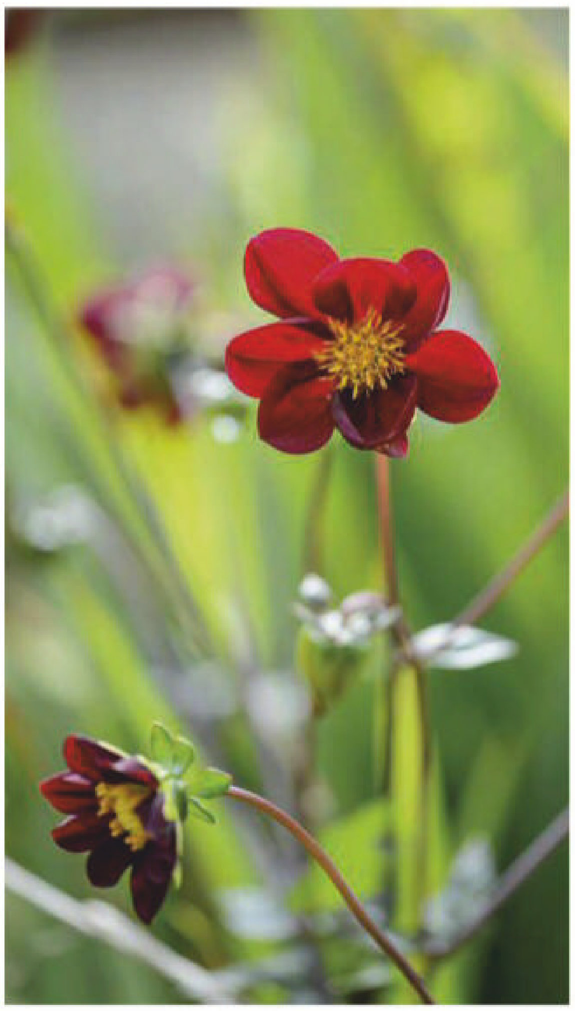
* Be sure to check opening times and advice on possible travel restrictions in advance

## *LIGULARIA DENTATA* 'DESDEMONA'

Thirty years ago, as pastel colours swept interior design, sophisticated gardeners tended to shun orange flowers. I've never been sophisticated and have always loved orange, especially when, as here, it's combined with handsome, rounded, rich purple foliage, especially in spring. While flowering, this perennial's foliage is grey-purple and dark red beneath, with purple stems. It demands a cool, even moist, spot or else a deep mulch, and most summers it will flag and droop its leaves during hot spells, quickly recovering as temperatures drop overnight.

**Height** 40-60cm.
**Origin** Garden (species China and Japan).
**Conditions** Moisture-retentive soil;
full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.
**Season of interest** All summer.





## *DAHLIA* 'MEXICAN STAR'

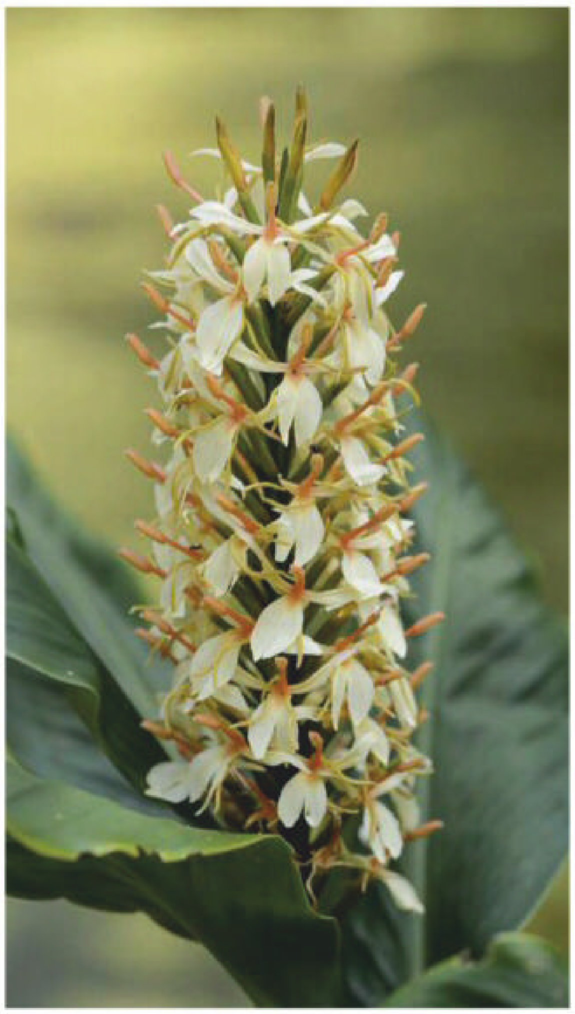
I imagine most people on smelling the flowers of the chocolate cosmos, *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, for the first time would be as intrigued as I was when I first encountered it. However, it isn't the most robust of plants to grow. This dahlia is reputedly an intergeneric hybrid with the chocolate cosmos and, if so, has certainly inherited much of its cosmos parent's distinctive chocolate scent. It is also much taller and easier to grow with purple-flushed foliage, and for me, has been perfectly happy remaining in the garden over winter without protection.

**Height** 90cm-1.2m.
**Origin** Garden (species Mexico).
**Conditions** Well-drained soil;
full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H4, USDA 8a-11.
**Season of interest** Summer to autumn.

## *HEDYCHIUM DENSIFLORUM* 'STEPHEN'

Hedychiums of any sort add a slightly tropical air to any planting, a little like lush-foliaged maize plants or small-leaved bananas, with the added advantage of handsome, occasionally scented flowers. This plant was collected in eastern Nepal as far back as 1966 but has never been widely available, partly because it is slow to bulk up. The soft-yellow flowers have contrasting orange stamens and a lovely scent. I leave mine in the ground over winter, protected with a thick mulch but in colder areas, it would be best lifted, potted and kept frost-free.

**Height** 90cm-1.2m.
**Origin** Garden (species Nepal).
**Conditions** Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
**Hardiness** RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.
**Season of interest** Summer to autumn.



offers a staggering array of fuchsias. It is open to visitors by appointment. Roualeyn Nursery, Trefriw, Conwy LL27 0SX. Tel 01492 640548, roualeynfuchsias.co.uk

In my own garden, August is the peak flowering month for agapanthus. There are several National Collections around the country, including that of **Dick and Lorna Fulcher** in Devon, who have long bred new agapanthus and open their garden by appointment. Pine Cottage, Fourways, Eggesford, Chulmleigh, Devon EX18 7QZ. Tel 01769 580076, plantheritage.org.uk

Much of the Fulchers' stock was sold to nearby **Bowdens Hostas** to produce a duplicate collection, so combining your visit with a trip to this nursery, would give you the chance both to add to your own agapanthus collection and see how hostas will look after their freshness of early summer has passed. Bowdens Nursery, Bowden Place, Sticklepath, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2NL. Tel 01837 849367, bowdenhostas.com

Travelling further west to Cornwall, agapanthus are one of the August highlights of **Trebah Garden**, along with its magnificent Hydrangea Valley. Planted by Charles Fox in 1831, this sub-tropical woodland garden occupies a ravine that leads to a private beach, while around the house you can find many Mediterranean plants. Trebah Garden Trust. Mawnan Smith, nr Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 5JZ. Tel 01326 252200, trebahgarden.co.uk

More agapanthus can be found at another Cornish garden **Bonython**, which has been created by Susan Nathan over the past 20 years, and also features a walled garden and an orchard of ornamental fruit trees. Cury Cross Lanes, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7BA. Tel 01326 240550, bonythonmanor.co.uk

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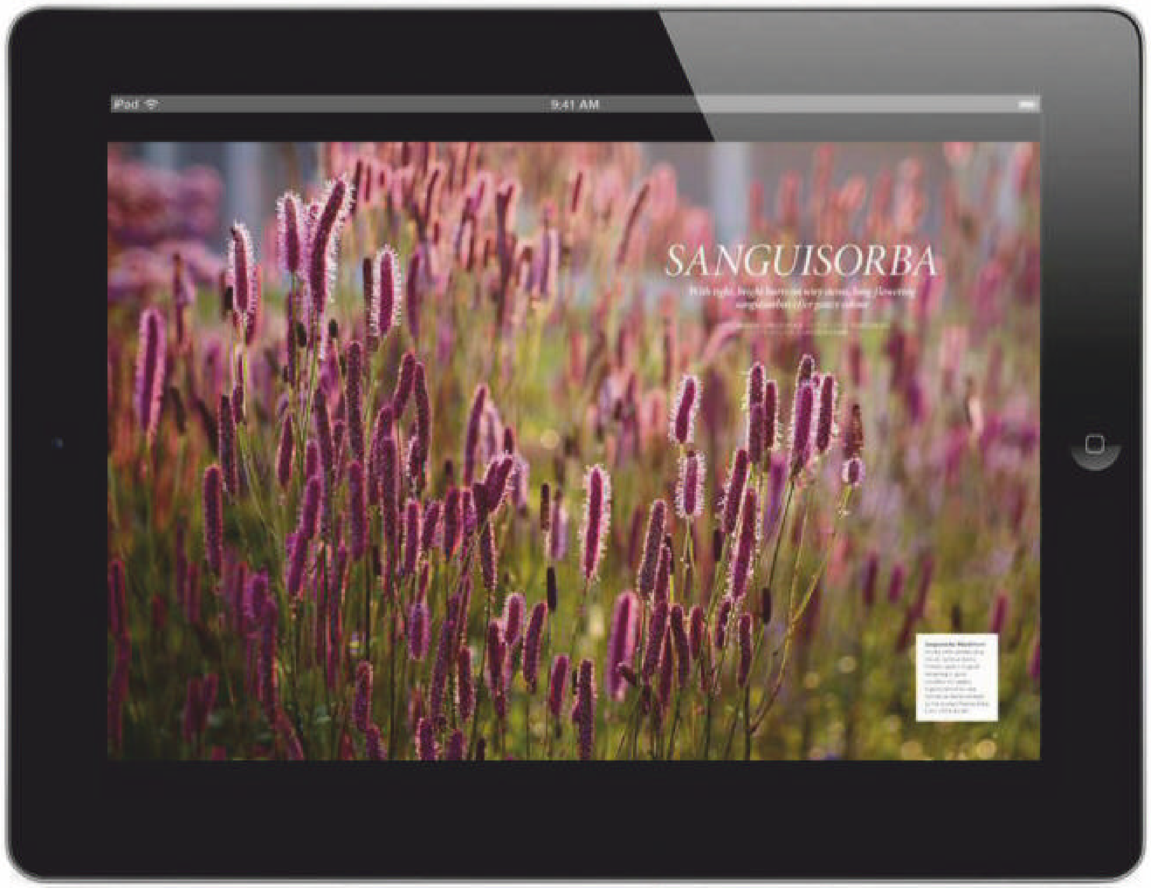

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Art of the garden

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# PEAK PRODUCE

For Great Dixter's gardener-cook, August is a month of rain and courgettes. It's also the moment when his vegetable patch reaches its productive peak and he can really start to enjoy the fruits of his labour

WORDS **AARON BERTELSEN**
ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

Oil
HERBS
ANCHOVIES

For many people, August is traditionally the holiday month. Unfortunately for them, it also often seems to turn out to be a month of cloudy skies and lots – and lots – of rain. I have no need to look at a calendar to know when the schools have broken up. I simply look at the sky.

Of course, for a gardener, rain is always welcome and, provided you have resisted the lure of a fortnight away somewhere damp and gloomy, this is the time to enjoy the vegetable garden at its productive peak, particularly if you are a fan of courgettes. Personally, I prefer to stay put in August and enjoy the fruits of my labours.

While the emphasis this month is very much on harvesting – and eating – there is still maintenance work to be done. Great growing weather for crops is also good news for weeds, so don't be tempted to take a holiday from the hoeing.

Despite what I have said about the weather, you will still need to keep an eye on the watering, too. Rain is all very well, but it does need to be the right type of rain to really penetrate the soil. Keep a careful eye on any crops growing in pots, and plants that are setting fruit now, such as apples and pears. Don't be tempted either to ignore globe artichokes, just because they look rather Mediterranean and drought-proof. They will repay regular soaking with a bountiful second flush. Christopher Lloyd always made sure he had artichokes to pick right the way through the summer, and loved to serve them as a starter, simply boiled and dressed with olive oil, salt and pepper. ❐

# Jobs for August

**Keep sowing salad crops.** A sowing every three or four weeks at this stage will see you into the early winter. You can thank me then.

**I like to do a late sowing of beetroot at around this time.** There is still time for the roots to develop, and the leaves make a delicious – and colourful – addition to autumn and winter salads.

**This is also a great time to sow onion seed.** It took me a while to find an onion that would do well in heavy clay soil, but now I have the answer: *Allium cepa* 'White Lisbon'. I like to sow quite thickly, so that I can add the thinnings to my salads.

**There is still time to get summer and winter radishes** into the ground too. They are quick growing and an excellent choice for shadier areas of the garden.

**Getting tomatoes to ripen can sometimes feel like a race against time.** Maximise the amount of sunlight that reaches the fruit – and reduce the risk of blight, which can be spread by soil splashing up on to the plants when you water – by stripping the lower leaves from your plants and pinching out the diagonal shoots that often appear between the main stem and the branches. Once my plants are around 1.5m tall I like to pinch out the tops too, to encourage them to put their energy into fruiting.

**Now is a good time to give your perennial herbs** a good cut back and clean up so that they have the time to recover before the cold months. Take out any old and damaged wood, cut back to where you can see new growth and remove any weeds. Then water well with a liquid feed such as seaweed.

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CROPS

If like me you are a salad obsessive, August is a time to rejoice as the peppery leaves sown last month start to appear. Rocket, mizuna and mustard greens will all add a most welcome zing to the salad bowl, and will keep cropping through the colder months.

Growing aubergines is a new adventure for me, and one I am thoroughly enjoying. I find they work particularly well in pots in an enclosed space, such as a courtyard, where they benefit from the heat reflecting from walls and can be moved around to take advantage of the sunshine. I love to make a simple *baba ganoush* by grilling them until they are properly charred, then scooping out the flesh and blending with tahini, olive oil and garlic.

But there can really be only one candidate for this month's recipe: the courgette. The punchy flavourings of lemon, anchovies and capers complement the mild, sweet flavour of the vegetable and should help to prevent courgette fatigue – a very real risk at this time of year – from setting in.

**You can find Aaron's delicious courgette salad recipe at gardensillustrated.com/recipes**

GARDENING TALENT

# GWYN PERRY

Gwyn cares for the beautifully matured Armscote Manor gardens, originally designed by Dan Pearson

PORTRAIT JAMES KERR

**Earliest garden memory** My grandparents' garden just outside York, which had lots of roses, an orchard and a large vegetable garden. I weeded and deadheaded roses with Grannie and picked 'White Transparent' apples, which were my favourite.
**First plant love** It became my ambition, after my first few months at Askham Bryan College to own or work with the best collection of begonias in the world. The variety of species fascinated me.
**Who has inspired your career the most** Mr Henry Bird, my rural studies teacher at Joseph Rowntree Secondary Modern School, taught us how to whip-and-tongue graft fruit trees using wax and raffia when I was 14. It's all down to him.
**Three worthwhile tips** Take time to think through a task or plan a change; recognise seedlings at their early stages, this allows best use of self-seeded subjects when hand weeding; and smelling the leaves, stems and flowers can be a great help with plant identification.
**Most valuable training** Being encouraged, and shown how, to 'see' things – not just look at them – and learning how to recognise plants from small pieces of material, especially twig identifications for trees. Having an identification or at least a good idea will allow you to research more information.
**Underappreciated plant** For me the aroids. Often flowering secretly beneath cover but with such unusual and amazing flowers.
**In what direction do you see horticulture heading in the next few years** I am hoping that because of the recent lockdown a good proportion of the country will now value our parks, open spaces and wider landscape more highly. The physical and mental benefits of gardens and gardening must be highlighted and the upturn in home vegetable growing encouraged.
**Favourite gardening books** *RHS Plant Finder* – I have more than a dozen copies from over the years and find it fun and sometimes frustrating each year to see what name changes there have been. I always find plants that I've never even heard of. And then there's *Mabberley's Plant-book* – a wondrous tome with so much information botanical and of wider interest. I never fail to be amazed by what plants can be used for.
**Useful information** Gwyn's role includes welcoming to the garden school groups for educational sessions, as well as working with apprentices and assisting trainees as part of the Women's Farm and Garden Association (WFGA), which helps those keen to enter gardening with skills development. armscotemanor.co.uk

> I hope people will now value our parks, open spaces and wider landscape more.

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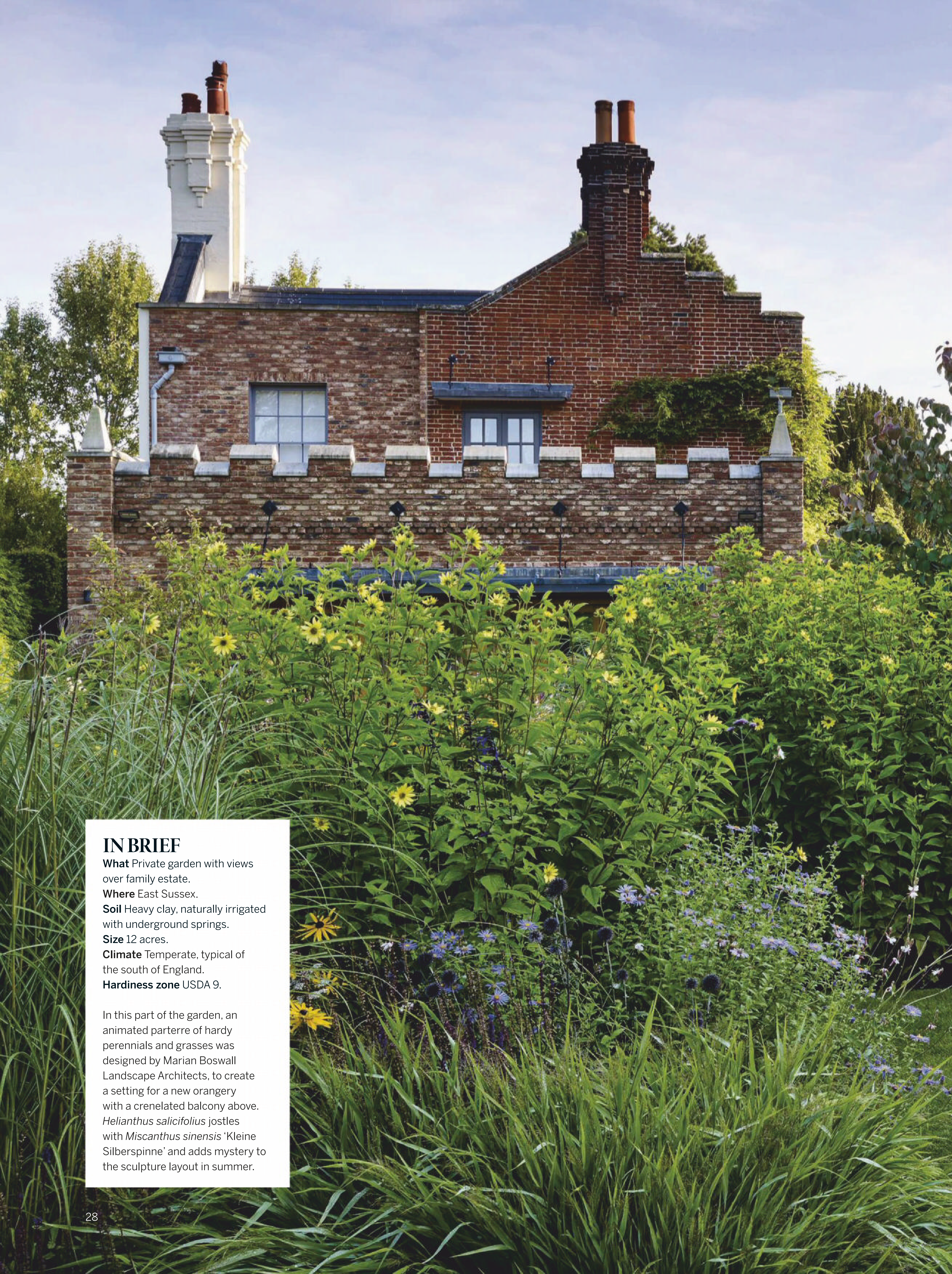


## IN BRIEF

**What** Private garden with views over family estate.
**Where** East Sussex.
**Soil** Heavy clay, naturally irrigated with underground springs.
**Size** 12 acres.
**Climate** Temperate, typical of the south of England.
**Hardiness zone** USDA 9.

In this part of the garden, an animated parterre of hardy perennials and grasses was designed by Marian Boswall Landscape Architects, to create a setting for a new orangery with a crenelated balcony above. *Helianthus salicifolius* jostles with *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' and adds mystery to the sculpture layout in summer.

# Art of the garden

In East Sussex, designer Marian Boswall has created a thoughtful landscape to accommodate a growing collection of contemporary sculpture

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

When designing an art collector's garden, it is only a matter of time before the sculptures begin to arrive. Landscape gardener Marian Boswall knew that "something bold was coming" when she took on a property in Sussex and began to reconfigure a traditional parterre. Enclosed within extant hedges of thuja, the new, perennial-based layout was designed for walking through, and also for the enjoyment of those looking out from the new orangery. Possibly the best view is from its crenelated balcony, where the owner practises yoga. From this perspective, the eye is drawn over the tall, high-spirited planting to a clearing in the cloud-pruned hedge, framed by woodland in the distance. Here, perfectly poised and naturally framed, sits a shiny three-metre sculpture of the model Kate Moss in an impressive yoga position, her body weight resting on her elbows. The sculpture is called *Myth Venus*, created by the artist Marc Quinn, and is one of several arresting, yet strangely serene sculptures in this thoughtfully landscaped garden.

Another edition of Kate Moss guards the garden entrance like a sphinx; no visitor is allowed to escape her unblinking gaze. Marian's client, a well-regarded art dealer, loves the reaction they get. "They are quite unconventional here and I like that," she says. The former garden layout is still fresh in the memory: only five years ago, visitors were greeted by a tarmac turning circle, with some greenery hiding a well. Now, a grid of gravel bisected with paths of shot-sawn Yorkstone accommodates cars for the many guests, their vehicles disappearing into a matrix of deep border planting.

With more than one sculpture at the front of the house, the plant structure is strong, with clipped hornbeam hedging, cubed topiary trees, and columns of yew. Box balls emerge from mobs of white wood aster (*Eurybia divaricata*) and daisies of *Erigeron karvinskianus*, with *Geranium renardii* offering further green and white groundcover. Adding vitality for months before they flower, verticals of veronicastrums (*V. virginicum* 'Album' and 'Fascination) spring up all around the parking area. "We wanted to use soft colours at the front," says Marian, "to complement the house and to provide a gentle welcome on arrival." The energy of green bursts into orange in autumn, with free-form *Parrotia persica* repeated through *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' opposite the front door.

**The plant structure is strong, with clipped hornbeam hedging, cubed topiary trees and columns of yew**

On the other side of the wide, neo-Gothic building, the view of the surrounding landscape is effortlessly glorious, taking in rocky hills of ancient forest. Despite or perhaps because of this spectacle, the great lawn of the past failed to meet the challenge, instead drifting away down a slope, partly blocked by four light-absorbing yews. These have been put to better use marking the four corners of a grounding croquet lawn, with low hornbeam hedging enclosing formal bosquets on either side. These contain small trees (magnolias, amelanchiers and lilacs) while also appearing to hold back larger park trees. Further out, beyond an area of wildflowers, is a ha-ha. Since this property is part of an estate, Marian was able to edit some of the less distant trees, adjusting the view as well as its frame.

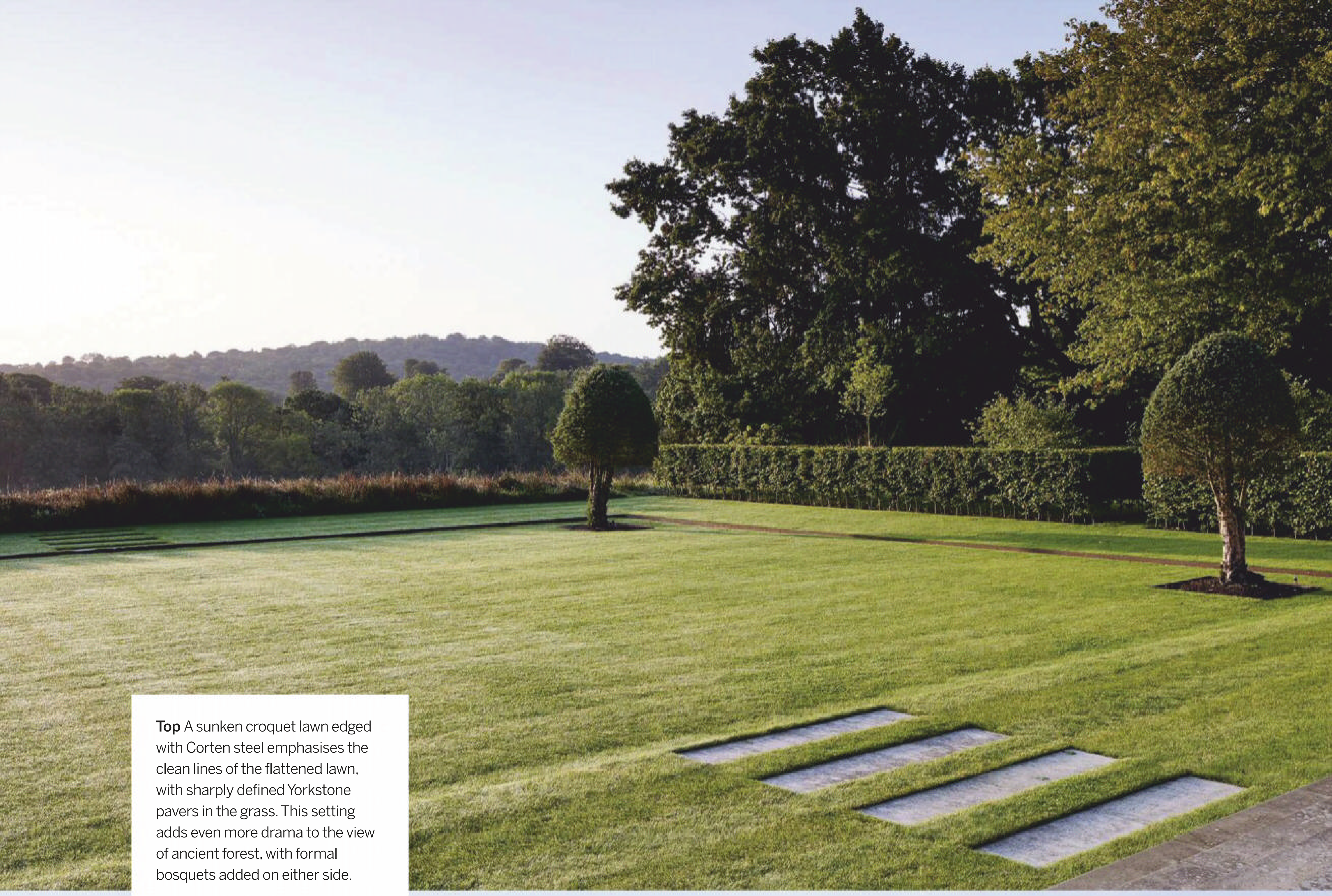
Many of the trees planted over the past five years, such as white willow and tulip tree, have been added with the express purpose of attracting bees. Strapped to a venerable oak, a wild bee hive hangs over a wildflower meadow in the shape of a labyrinth. Marian used a classic medieval design, with bricks laid four across, in staggered bond. While the meandering path requires a certain concentration, ox-eye daisies, tufted vetch and ragged robin are the accompaniment. It is an effective way of experiencing a meadow without trampling through.

The labyrinth is the most recent part of this project, over the hedge from the oldest: the parterre. The parterre is another – looser – circuit of paths, curling around tall, effusive planting. Facing south, communities of hardy perennials, such as the elegant sunflower *Helianthus salicifolius* and deep-red *Persicaria amplexicaulis*, are held back by plumes of *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' and mats of *Hakonechloa macra*. Behind the glass windows of the orangery that overlooks it, two oversized and intensely colourful Marc Quinn flower paintings dominate the room. When Marian first arrived, the indoor Quinns set the tone for the outside. "We had a choice of going very quiet, to allow the paintings to shout alone, or to sing with them. Hence," says Marian with some understatement, "the garden is vibrant." □

**USEFUL INFORMATION**

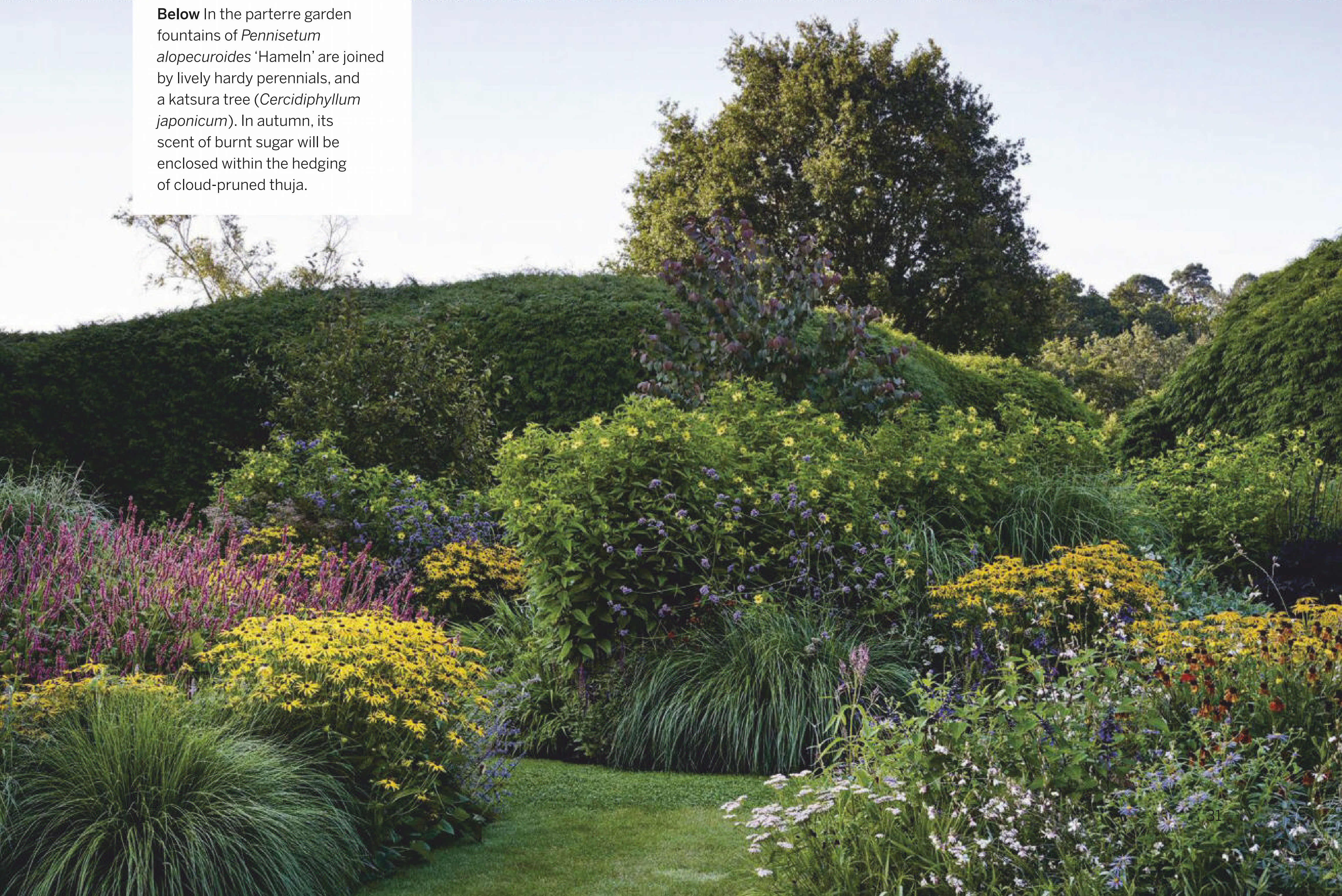
Find out more about Marian's work at **marianboswall.com**

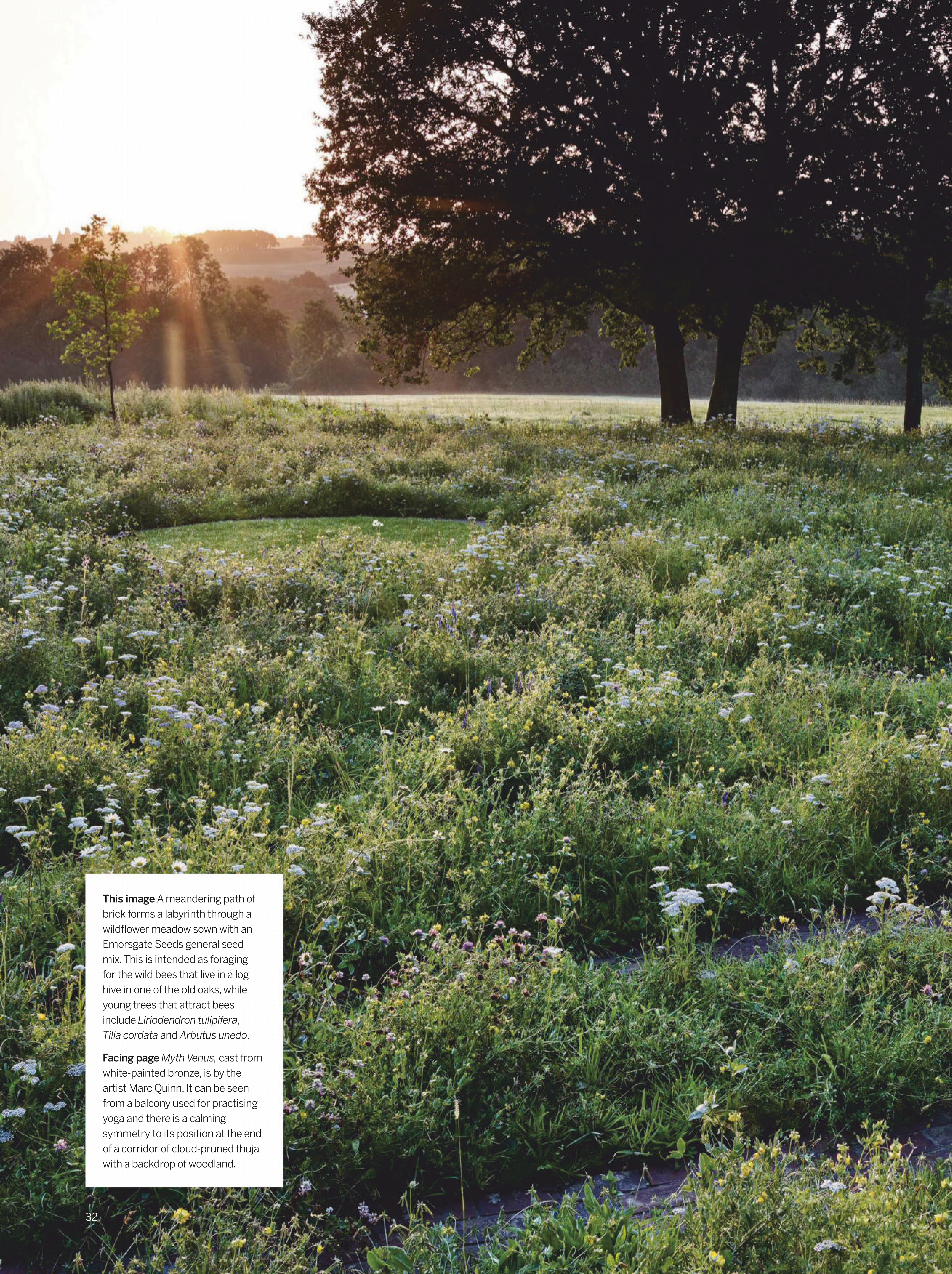
Turn the page to see more of the garden



**Top** A sunken croquet lawn edged with Corten steel emphasises the clean lines of the flattened lawn, with sharply defined Yorkstone pavers in the grass. This setting adds even more drama to the view of ancient forest, with formal bosquets added on either side.

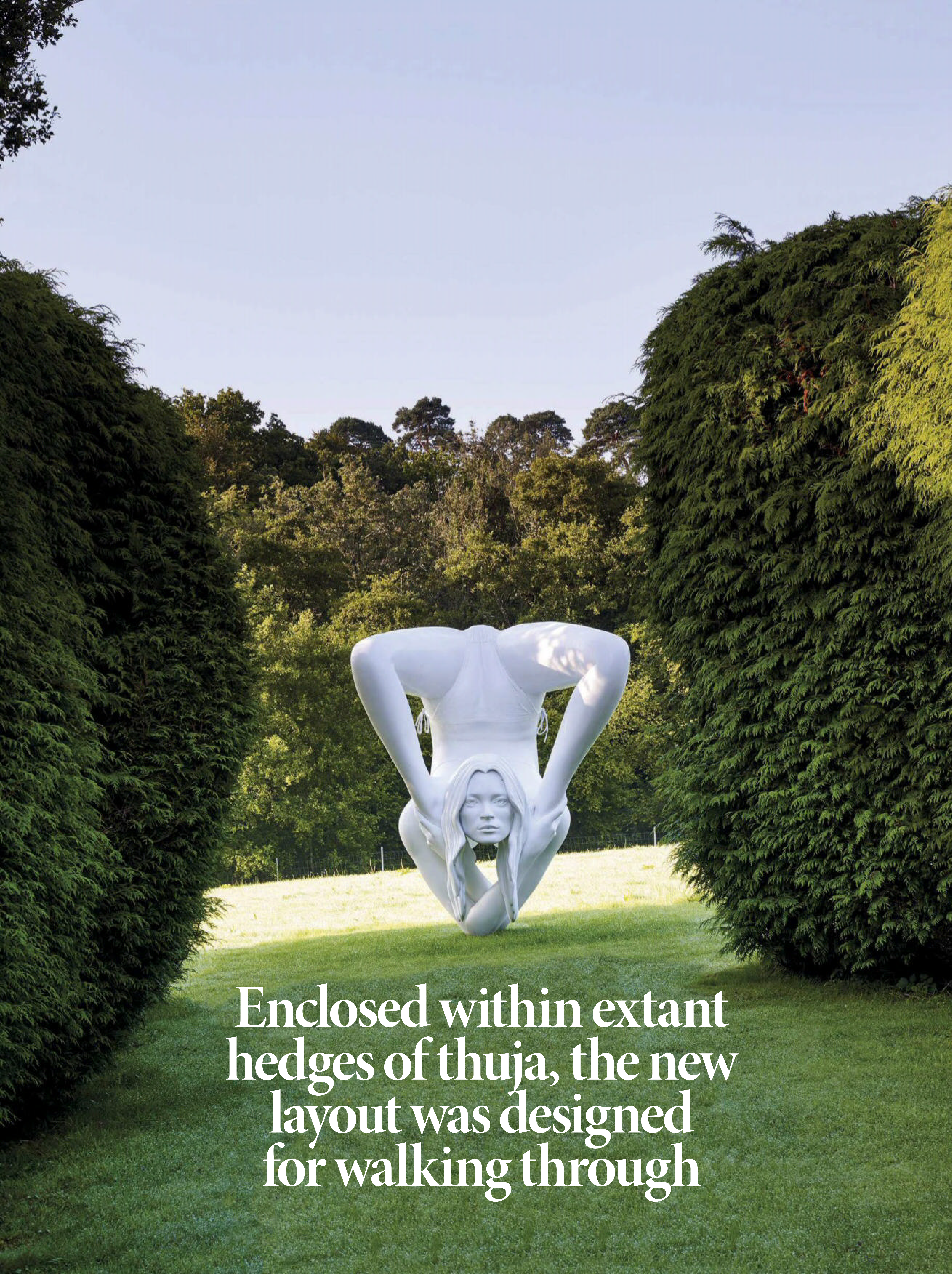
**Below** In the parterre garden fountains of *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' are joined by lively hardy perennials, and a katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*). In autumn, its scent of burnt sugar will be enclosed within the hedging of cloud-pruned thuja.



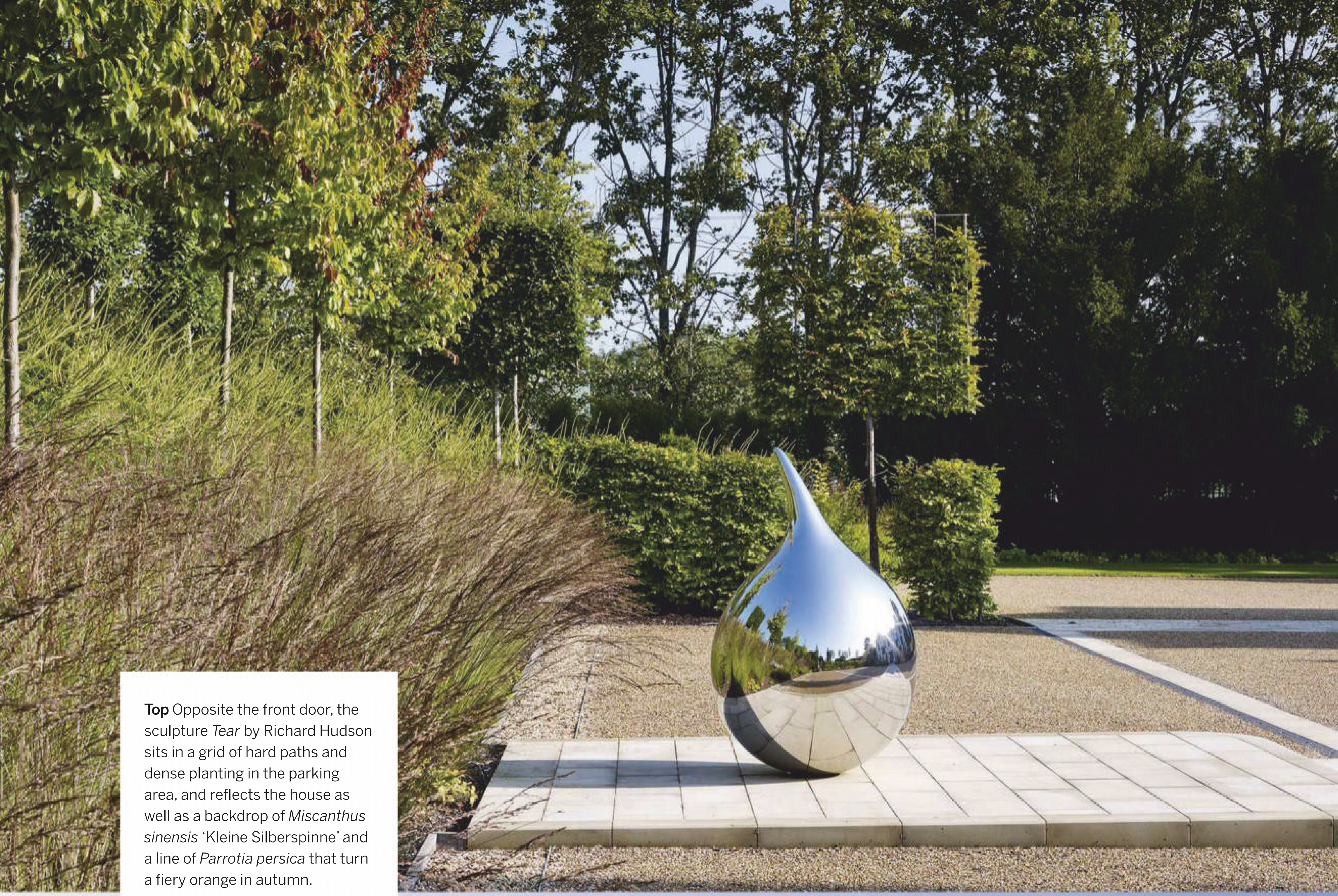


**This image** A meandering path of brick forms a labyrinth through a wildflower meadow sown with an Emorsgate Seeds general seed mix. This is intended as foraging for the wild bees that live in a log hive in one of the old oaks, while young trees that attract bees include *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Tilia cordata* and *Arbutus unedo*.

**Facing page** *Myth Venus,* cast from white-painted bronze, is by the artist Marc Quinn. It can be seen from a balcony used for practising yoga and there is a calming symmetry to its position at the end of a corridor of cloud-pruned thuja with a backdrop of woodland.

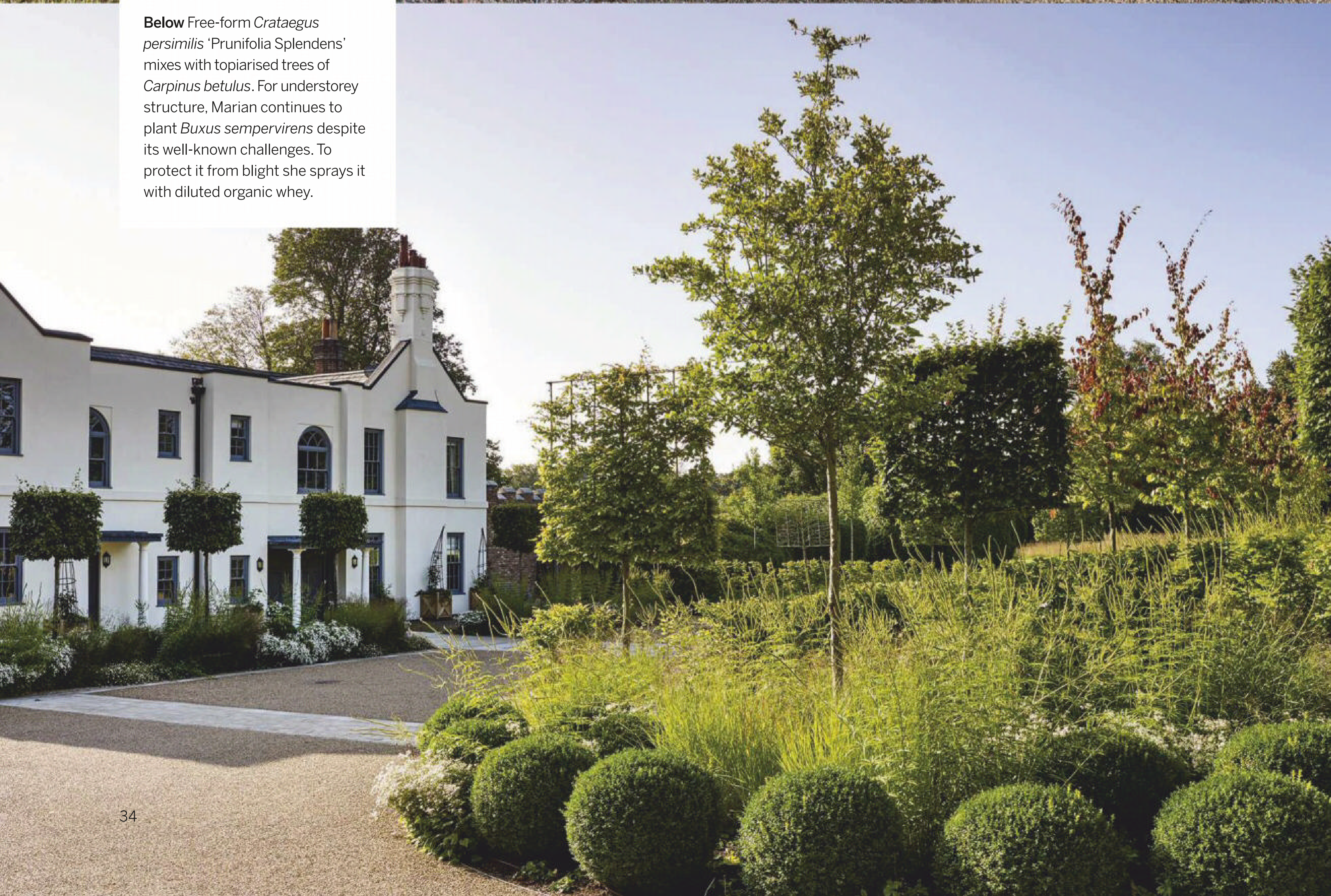


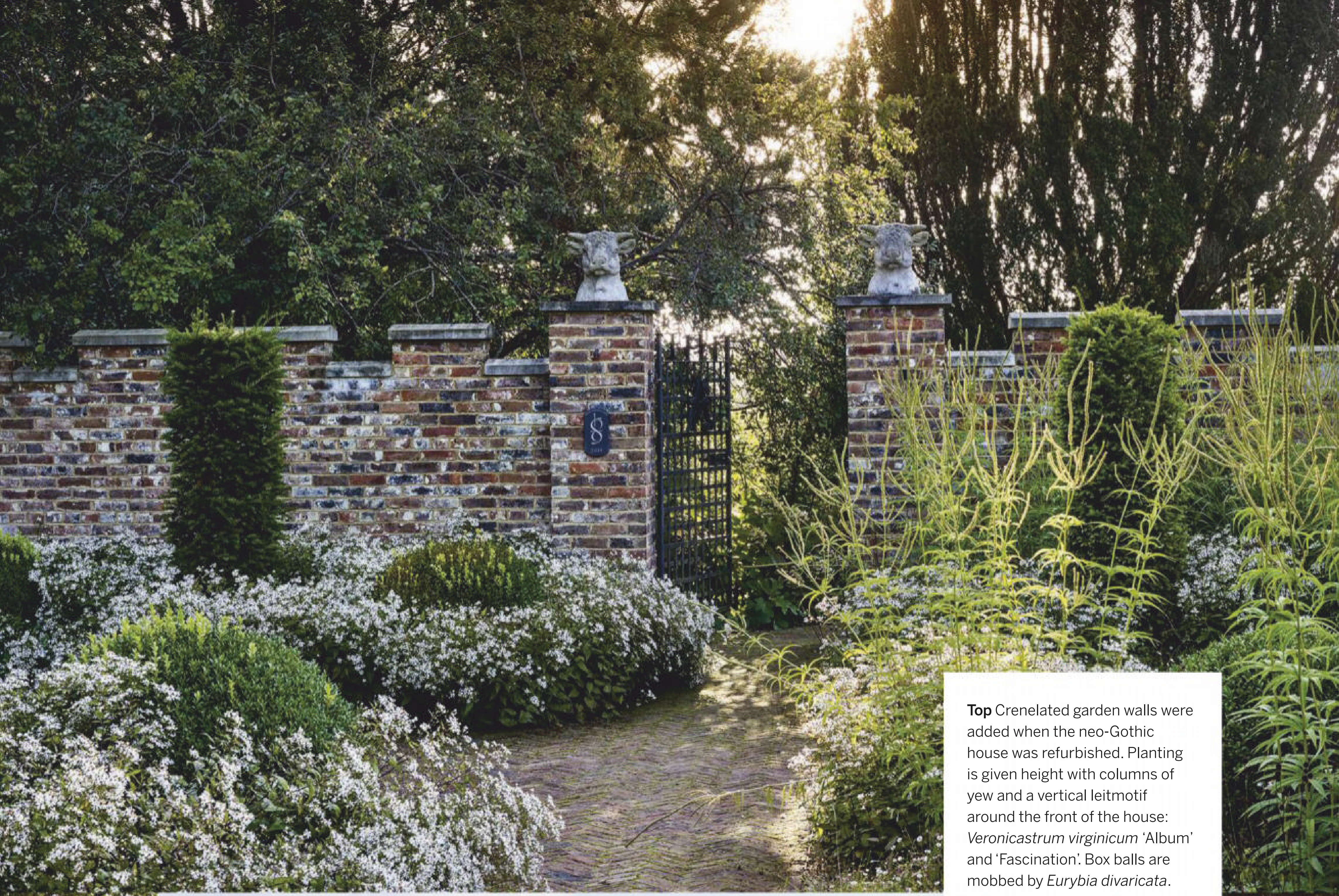
Enclosed within extant hedges of thuja, the new layout was designed for walking through

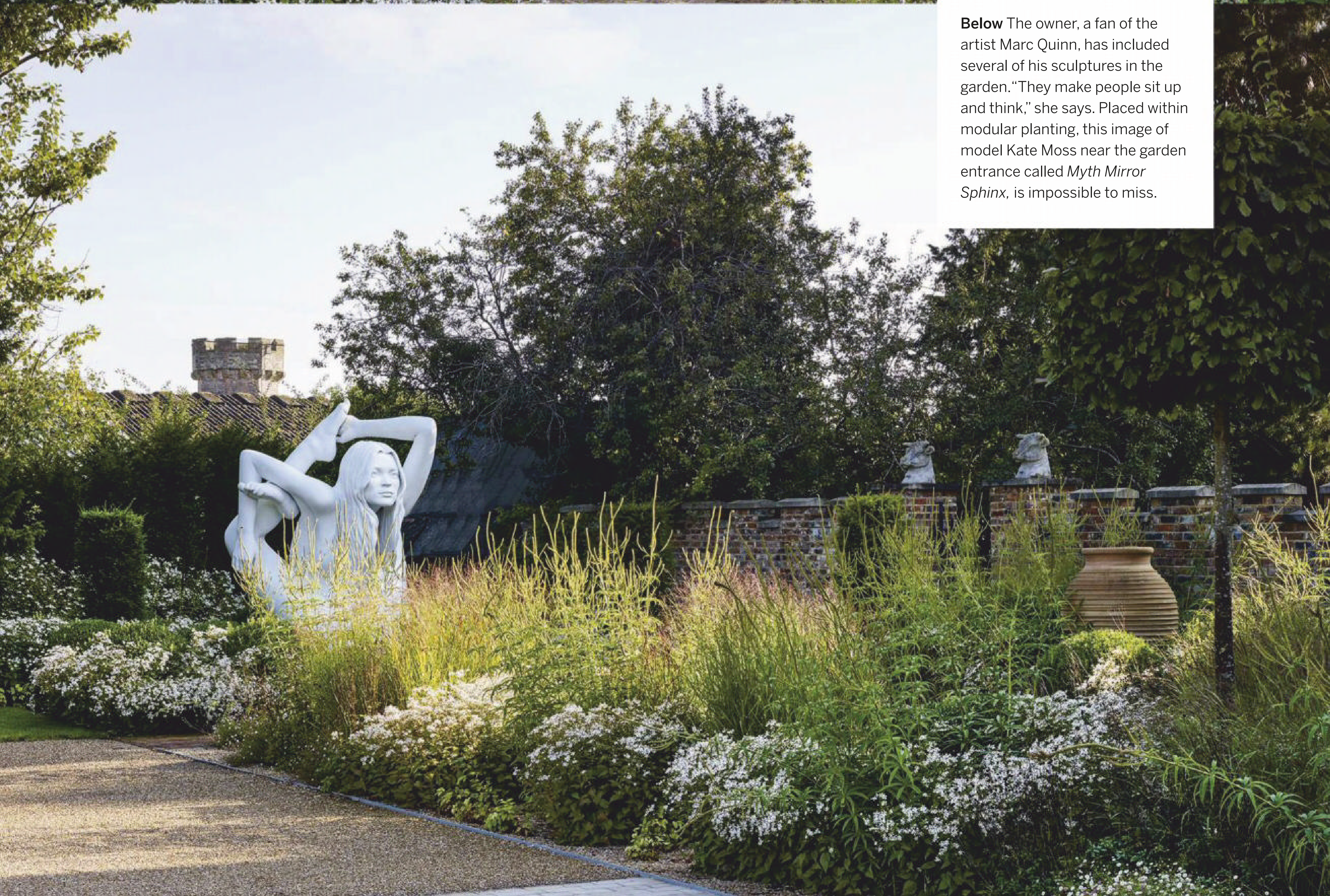


**Top** Opposite the front door, the sculpture *Tear* by Richard Hudson sits in a grid of hard paths and dense planting in the parking area, and reflects the house as well as a backdrop of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' and a line of *Parrotia persica* that turn a fiery orange in autumn.

**Below** Free-form *Crataegus persimilis* 'Prunifolia Splendens' mixes with topiarised trees of *Carpinus betulus*. For understorey structure, Marian continues to plant *Buxus sempervirens* despite its well-known challenges. To protect it from blight she sprays it with diluted organic whey.







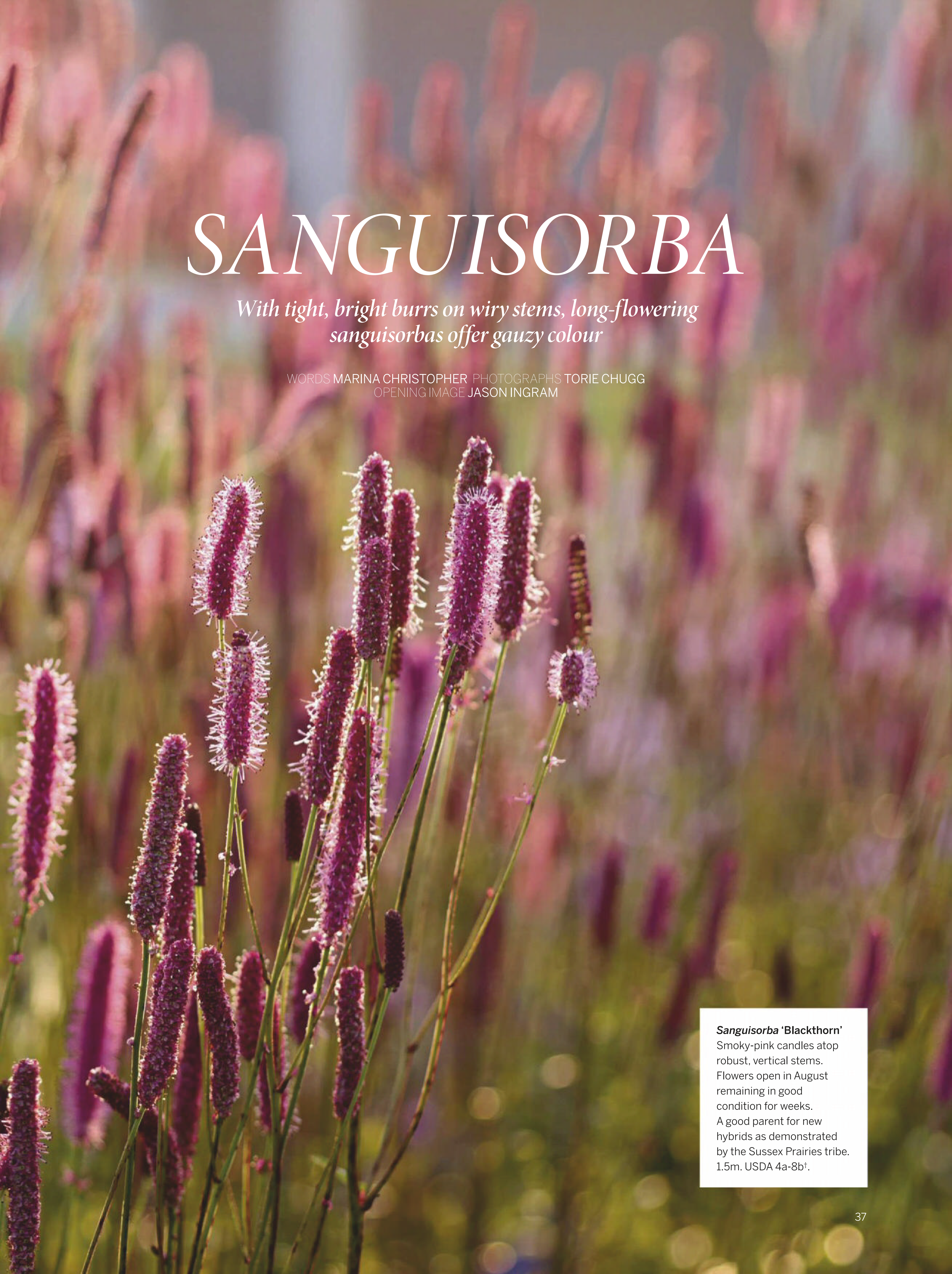
**Top** Crenelated garden walls were added when the neo-Gothic house was refurbished. Planting is given height with columns of yew and a vertical leitmotif around the front of the house: *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Album' and 'Fascination'. Box balls are mobbed by *Eurybia divaricata*.

**Below** The owner, a fan of the artist Marc Quinn, has included several of his sculptures in the garden. "They make people sit up and think," she says. Placed within modular planting, this image of model Kate Moss near the garden entrance called *Myth Mirror Sphinx,* is impossible to miss.

# SANGUISORBA

*With tight, bright burrs on wiry stems, long-flowering sanguisorbas offer gauzy colour*

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS TORIE CHUGG
OPENING IMAGE JASON INGRAM



***Sanguisorba* 'Blackthorn'**
Smoky-pink candles atop robust, vertical stems. Flowers open in August remaining in good condition for weeks. A good parent for new hybrids as demonstrated by the Sussex Prairies tribe. 1.5m. USDA 4a-8b†.

Once, while wandering over the chalk downs of Box Hill in Surrey, I noticed the delicate scent of cucumber. On inspection of the ground beneath my feet I discovered I was standing on a diminutive pinnate-leaved plant that had small, globular, greenish-red heads with long straggly stamens: the salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*). This was my first encounter with one of the two British native burnets, the other, the great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*), preferring moisture-retentive soils in meadows or at the edge of woodland. It is much taller at 1.2m with small, burgundy bobbles atop wiry stems.

Burnets are found throughout Europe, Asia, Japan and North America. On a plant-hunting expedition to Korea in 1993 with James Compton, John d'Arcy, and John Coke, we collected several seed samples from various *Sanguisorba* species possibly akin to *Sanguisorba officinalis* and *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* among others. Their horticultural importance is that it appears that the further east the plant was collected the later the flowering time. In Europe, *Sanguisorba officinalis* usually blooms in late June and July, whereas our collections from Korea were at their peak in August and September. *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry', collected in Yunnan in southwest China by Dan Hinkley, flowers as late as October and November in some seasons. With the propensity for hybridisation within this genus many garden-worthy burnets have been named but in such large numbers that a trial to evaluate the many species and cultivars is currently being undertaken at RHS Garden Wisley.

Burnets are particularly suited to naturalistic plantings, and different hybrids flower throughout the season from late April to November. There are several methods of pollination within this genus. *Sanguisorba minor* and *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* var. *alba* are wind pollinated with long stamens so that pollen is easily wafted away in the breeze. These species and hybrids are rarely scented and tend to be greenish or white. Others, such as *Sanguisorba officinalis* with its compact burgundy burrs, are mainly pollinated by flies, while the fat catkins of *Sanguisorba hakusanensis* and its hybrids are sweetly scented and brightly coloured – the Barbara Cartlands of the plant world – in vivid pink or magenta that attracts butterfly pollinators in their native habitats.

As all species and hybrids readily hybridise these features get thoroughly mixed up in the resulting progeny. Growing several different burnets in close proximity has produced some wonderful hybrids such as those at Sussex Prairies where substantial specimens of *Sanguisorba* 'Blackthorn' with upright tapers of smoky pink flowers are cheek by jowl with other sanguisorbas and are likely parents to the Sussex Prairies hybrids: 'Sussex Prairies Cheyenne', 'Sussex Prairies Navaho', 'Sussex Prairies Iroquois' and 'Sussex Prairies Apache'.

*Sanguisorba canadensis* is a robust plant with strong stems growing to 1.5m, and flowers in late summer with vertical candles of greenish-white opening to pure white as the flowers mature. How I would love to see a red or deep-burgundy flowered burnet with 15cm-long candles, such as those displayed by *Sanguisorba canadensis*, but with the propensity for hybridisation – watch this space.

Burnets are not all about flowers; their foliage contributes greatly to the naturalistic border with handsome pinnate foliage and toothed margins to the leaflets. Mounds of glaucous-green foliage on *Sanguisorba armena* are somewhat reminiscent of that of *Melianthus major.* White catkin-like flowers with black stamens, which are best removed as they detract from the foliage effect, appear late in the season. It spreads by suckering and can colonise large areas, whereas the well-behaved *Sanguisorba obtusa* 'Chatto' is compact with grey-green leaves.

Subtle and charming *Sanguisorba* species and hybrids grow easily in any moderately fertile soil that is moisture-retentive and does not get overly dry or waterlogged. They have excellent foliage, are not prone to pests and diseases and can provide many months of interest. ❑

- Marina Christopher is a nurserywoman who runs Phoenix Perennial Plants.
Her recommendations for the best sanguisorbas can be found over the next five pages.

## *PLANT PROFILE*

**What** Hardy herbaceous perennials belonging to the Rosaceae family. They have pinnate foliage with toothed leaflet margins and branched wiry stems with terminal clusters of burrs, nodding catkins or candle-like flowers in white, green, pink, red and plum. Commonly known as burnets, there are around 18 species and thousands of hybrids.

**Origins** Exclusive to the temperate Northern Hemisphere.

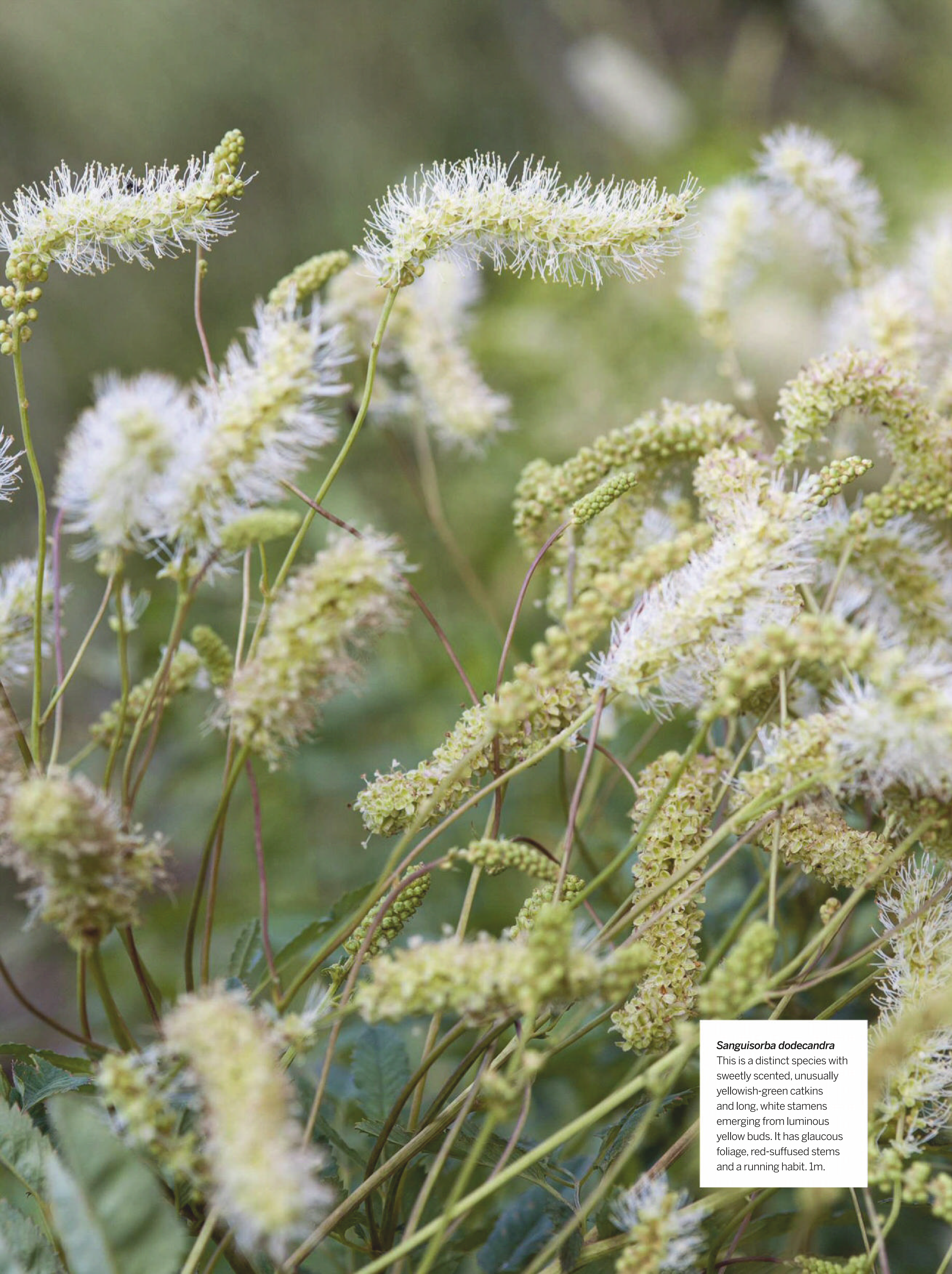
**Season** A long season of interest can be provided by this genus from early April until mid November.

**Size** Varies from a few centimetres to 2.5m.

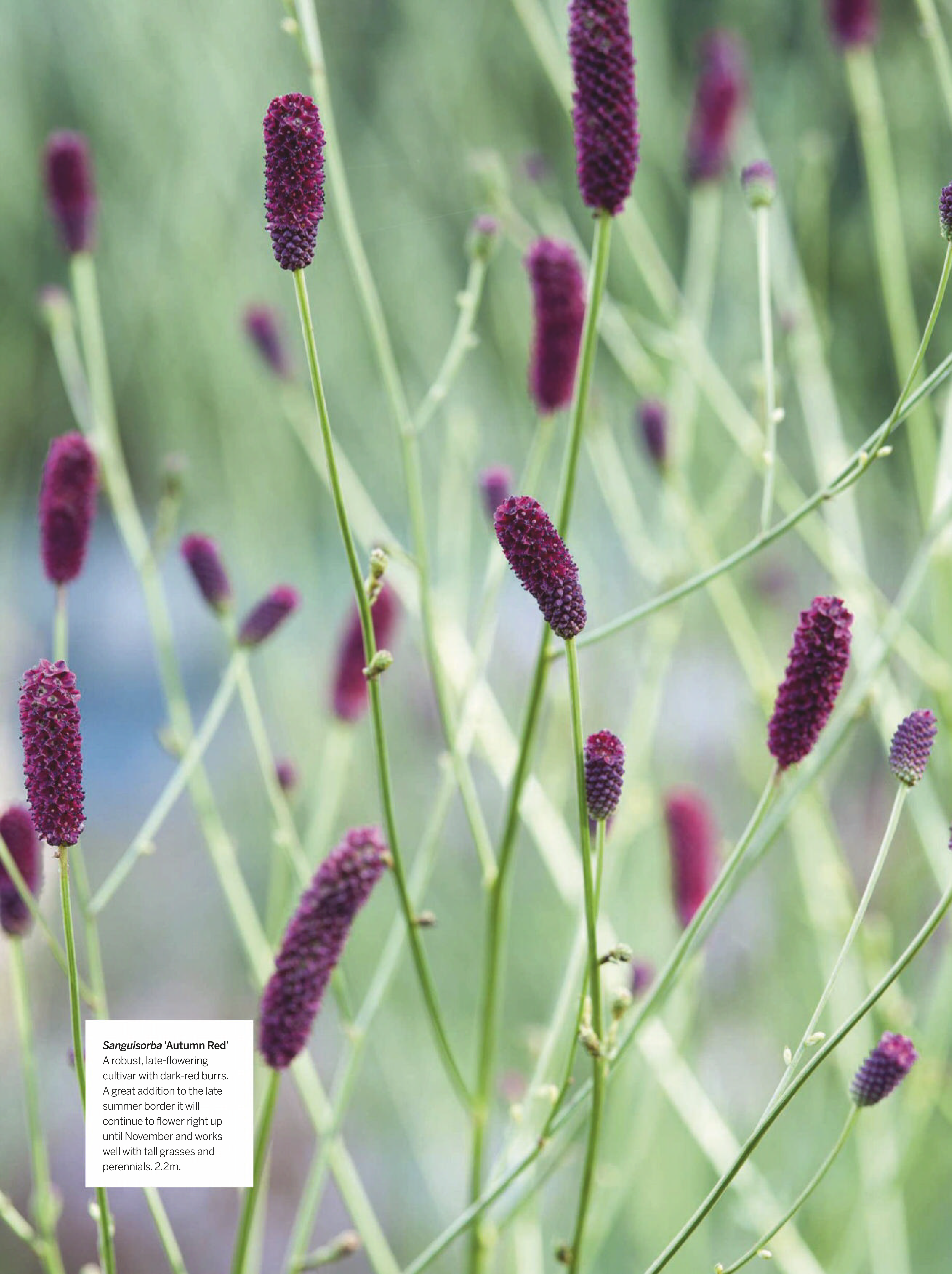
**Conditions** Most grow in moist grasslands with a few species from drier limestone habitats.

**Hardiness** Sanguisorbas are hardy perennials and ideal for UK gardens. Most have a hardiness rating of RHS H7 and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 3a to 8b.

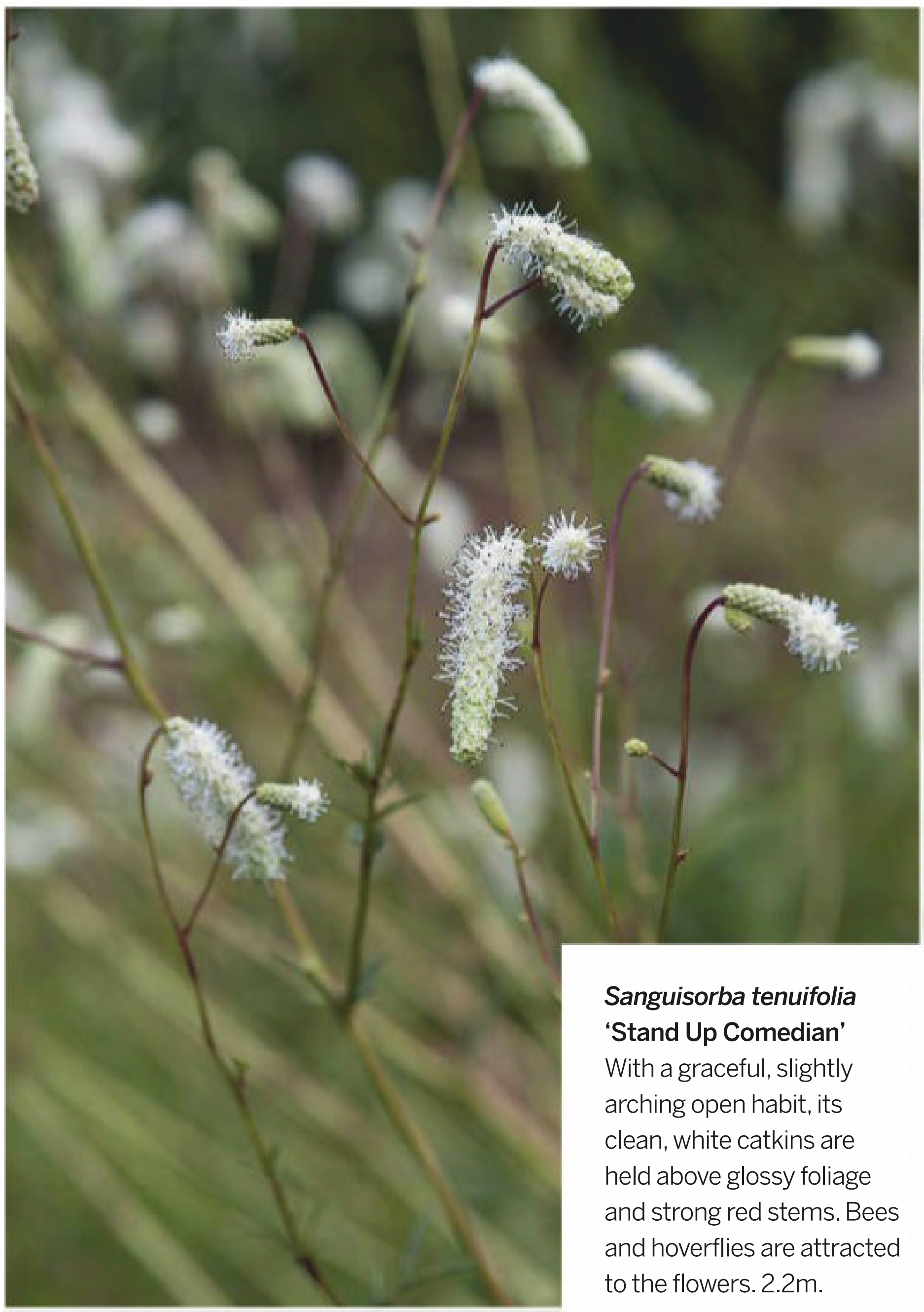
† Hardiness ratings given where available.

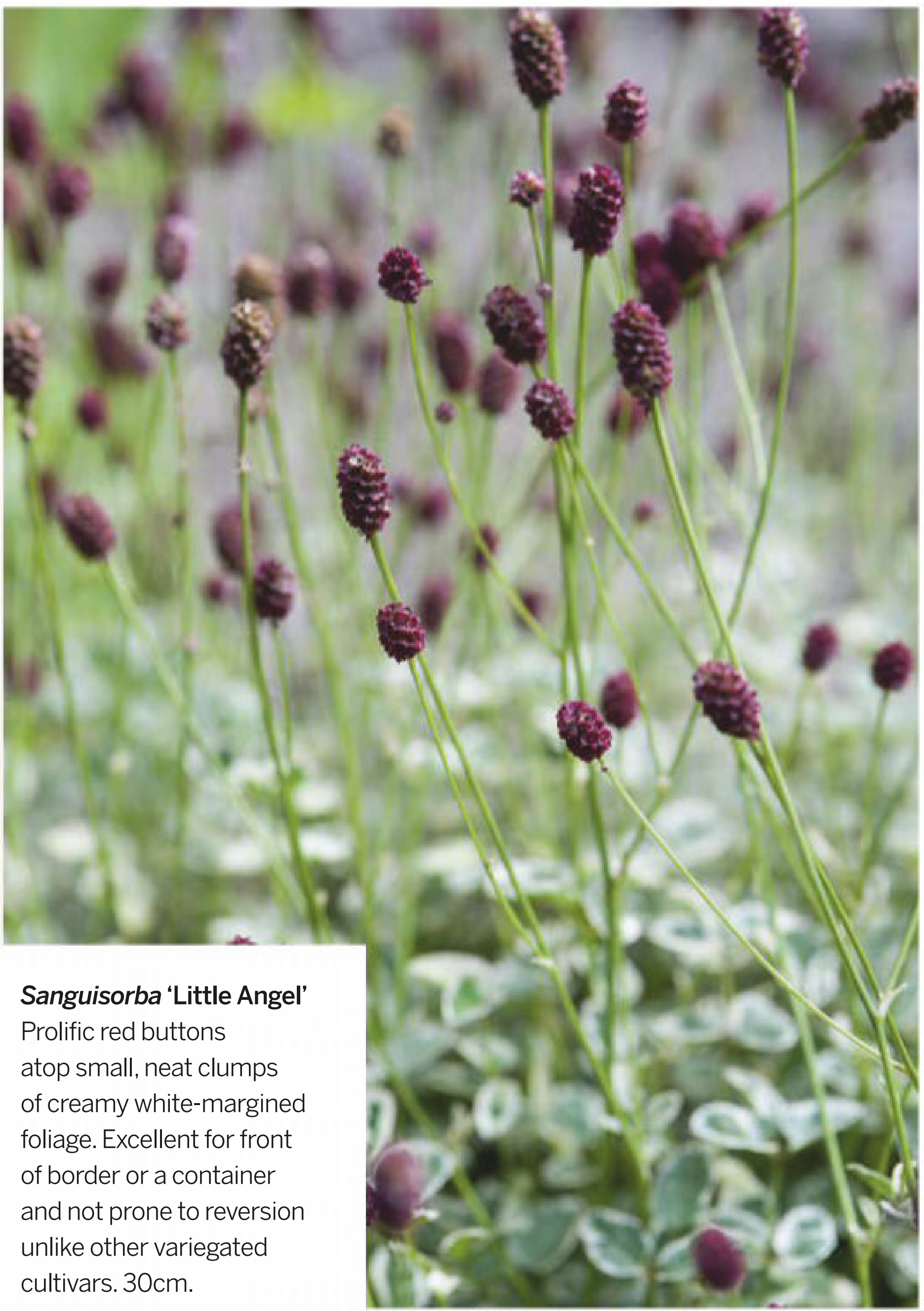


*Sanguisorba dodecandra*
This is a distinct species with sweetly scented, unusually yellowish-green catkins and long, white stamens emerging from luminous yellow buds. It has glaucous foliage, red-suffused stems and a running habit. 1m.



***Sanguisorba*** **'Autumn Red'**
A robust, late-flowering cultivar with dark-red burrs. A great addition to the late summer border it will continue to flower right up until November and works well with tall grasses and perennials. 2.2m.



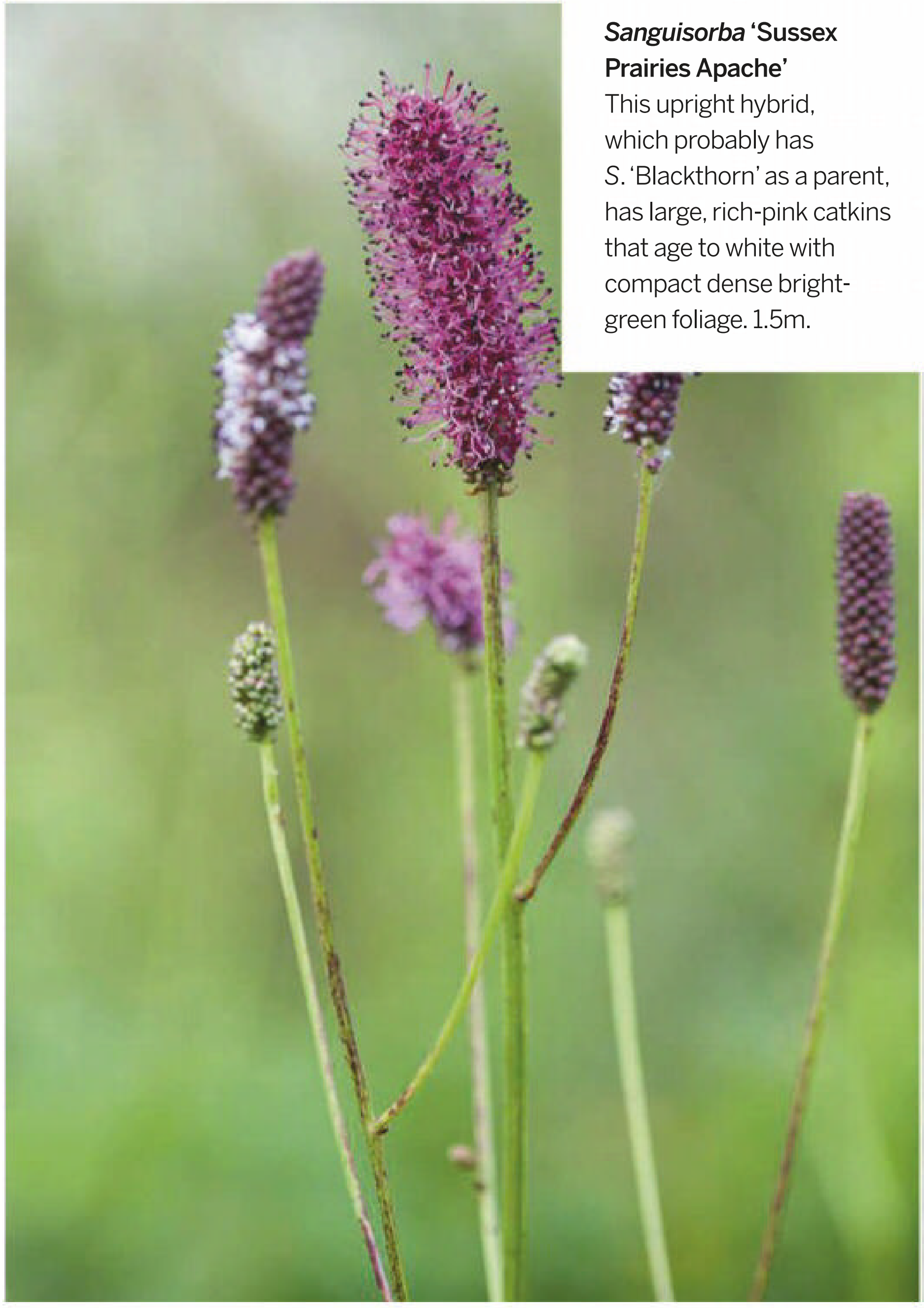


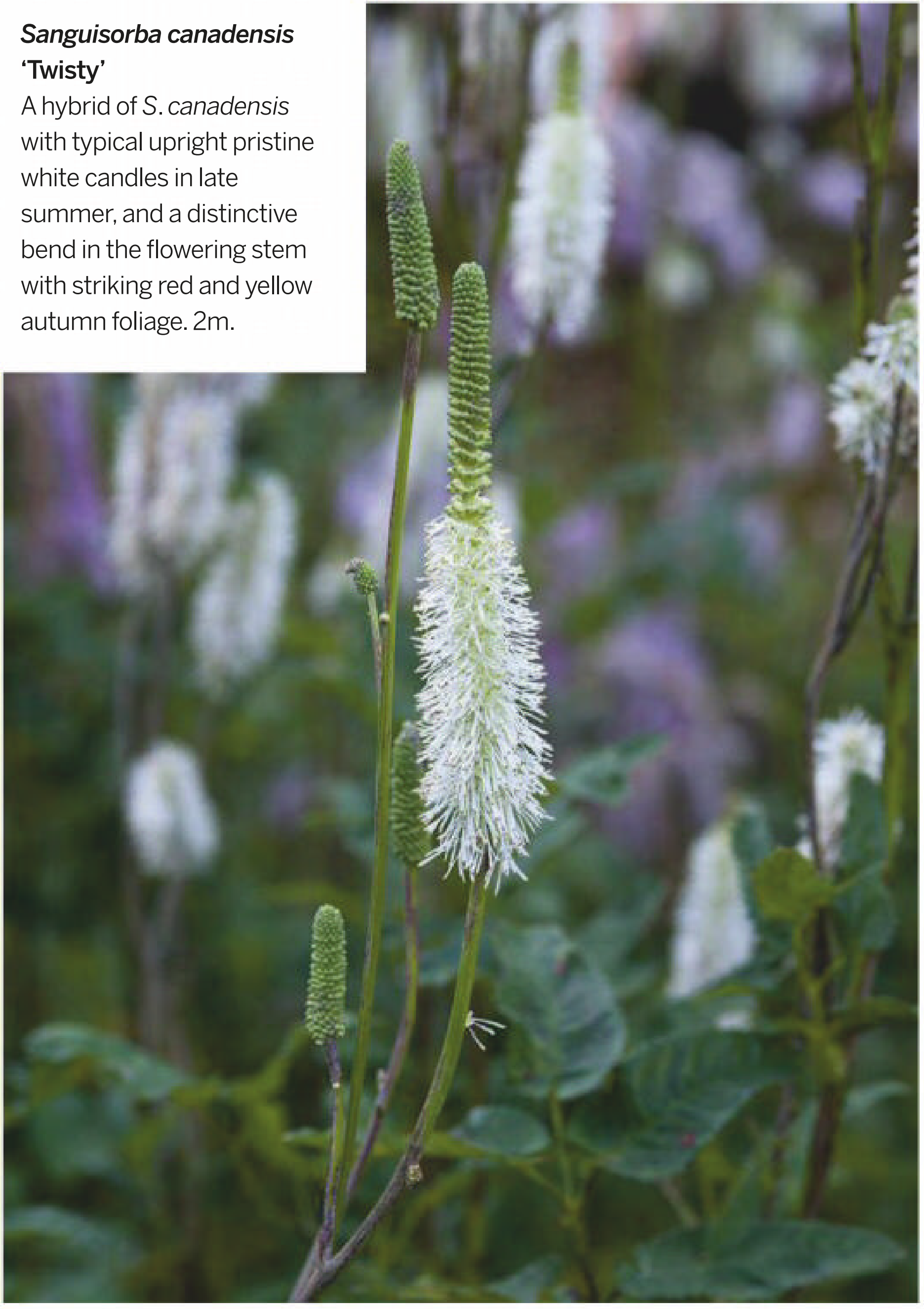
***Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Stand Up Comedian'**
With a graceful, slightly arching open habit, its clean, white catkins are held above glossy foliage and strong red stems. Bees and hoverflies are attracted to the flowers. 2.2m.

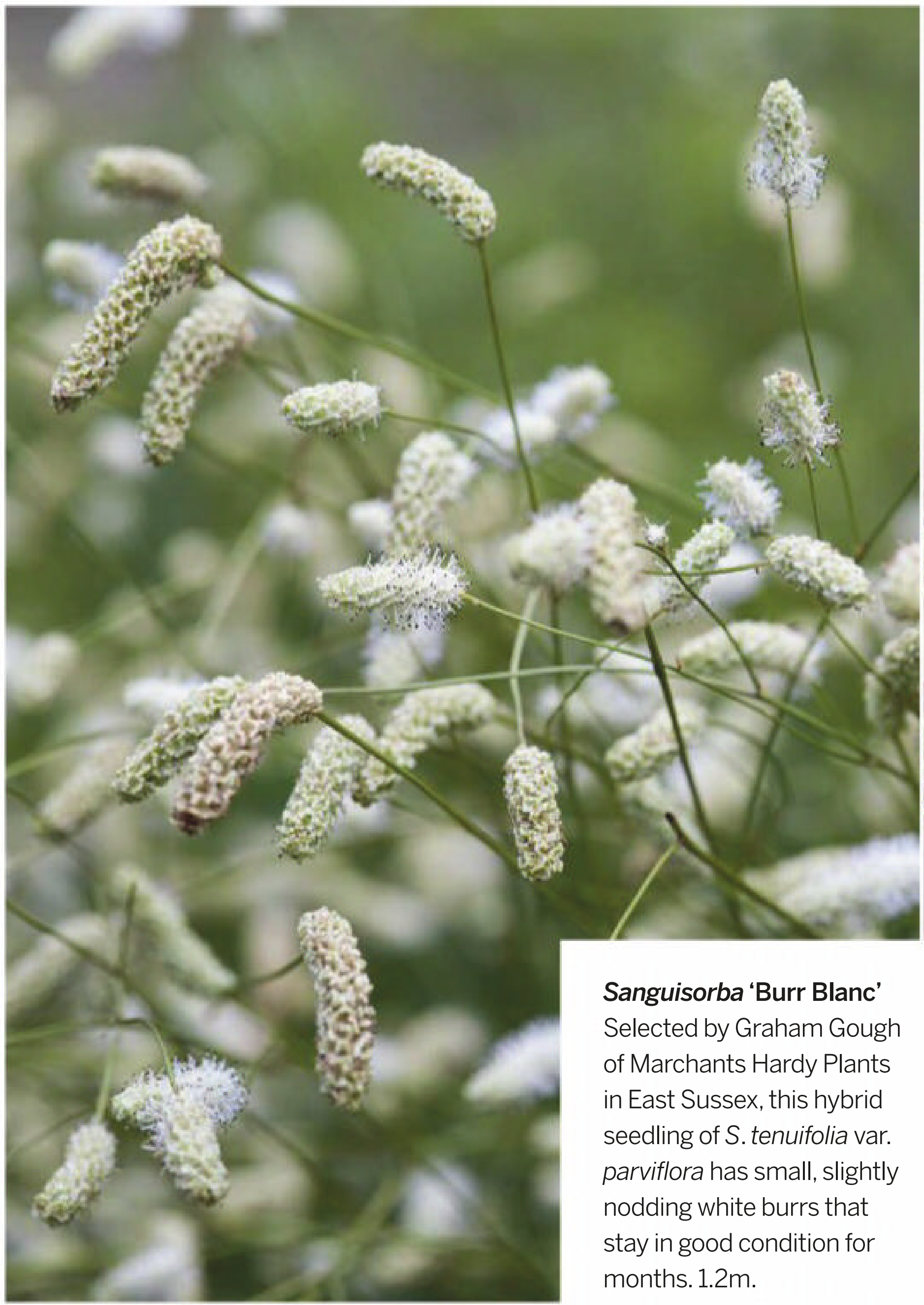
***Sanguisorba* 'Sussex Prairies Apache'**
This upright hybrid, which probably has *S.* 'Blackthorn' as a parent, has large, rich-pink catkins that age to white with compact dense bright-green foliage. 1.5m.

***Sanguisorba* 'Little Angel'**
Prolific red buttons atop small, neat clumps of creamy white-margined foliage. Excellent for front of border or a container and not prone to reversion unlike other variegated cultivars. 30cm.

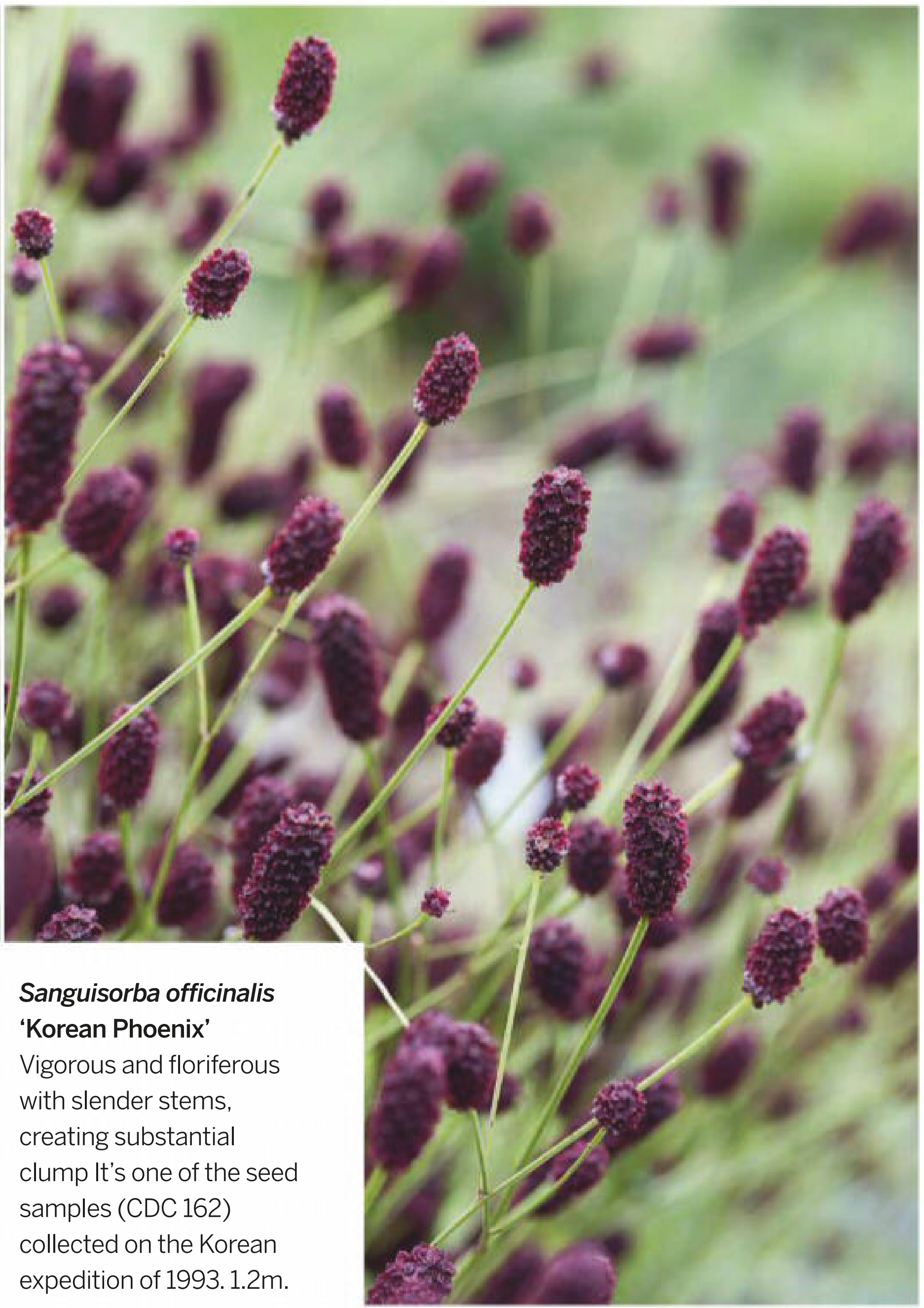
***Sanguisorba canadensis* 'Twisty'**
A hybrid of *S. canadensis* with typical upright pristine white candles in late summer, and a distinctive bend in the flowering stem with striking red and yellow autumn foliage. 2m.



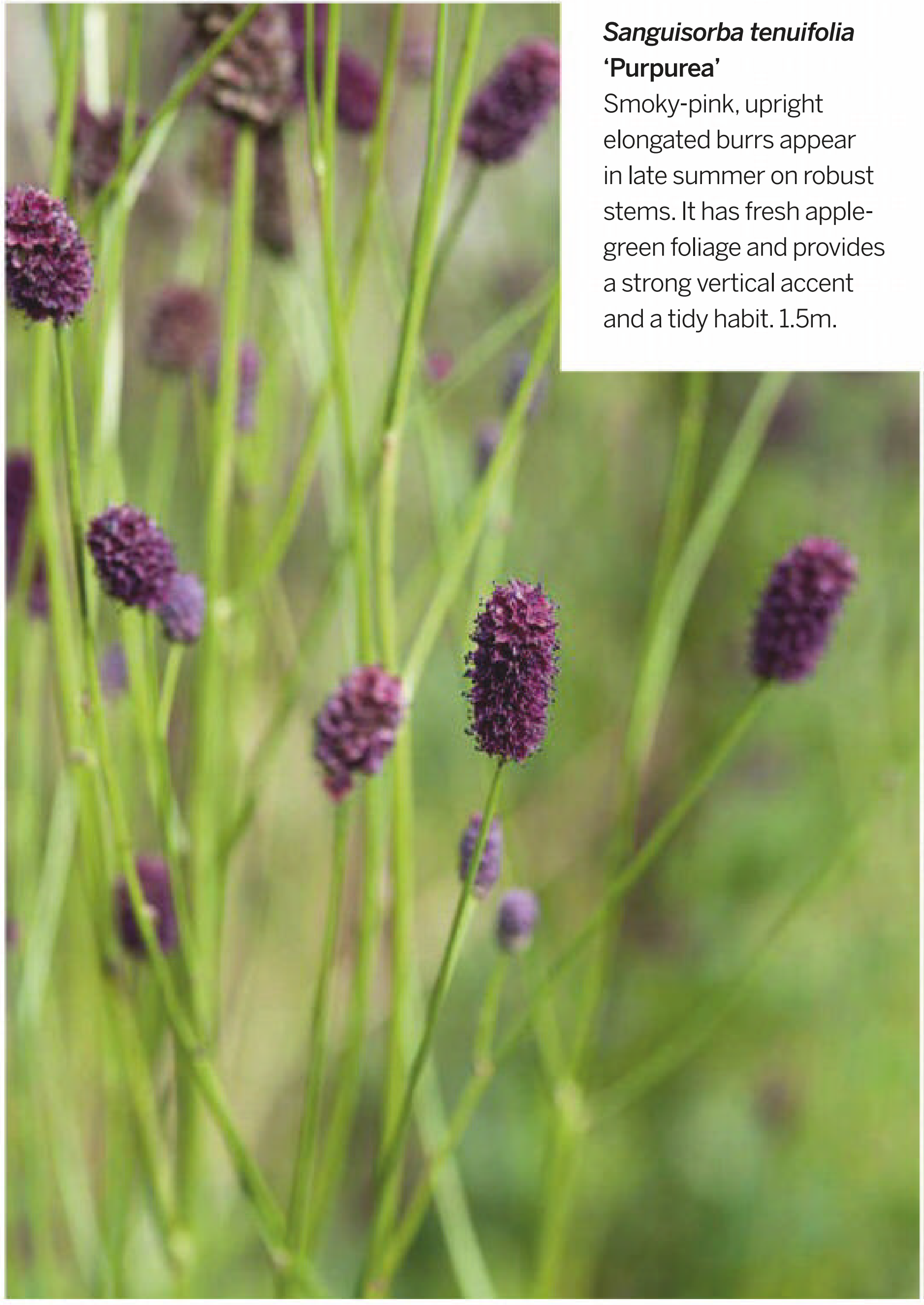




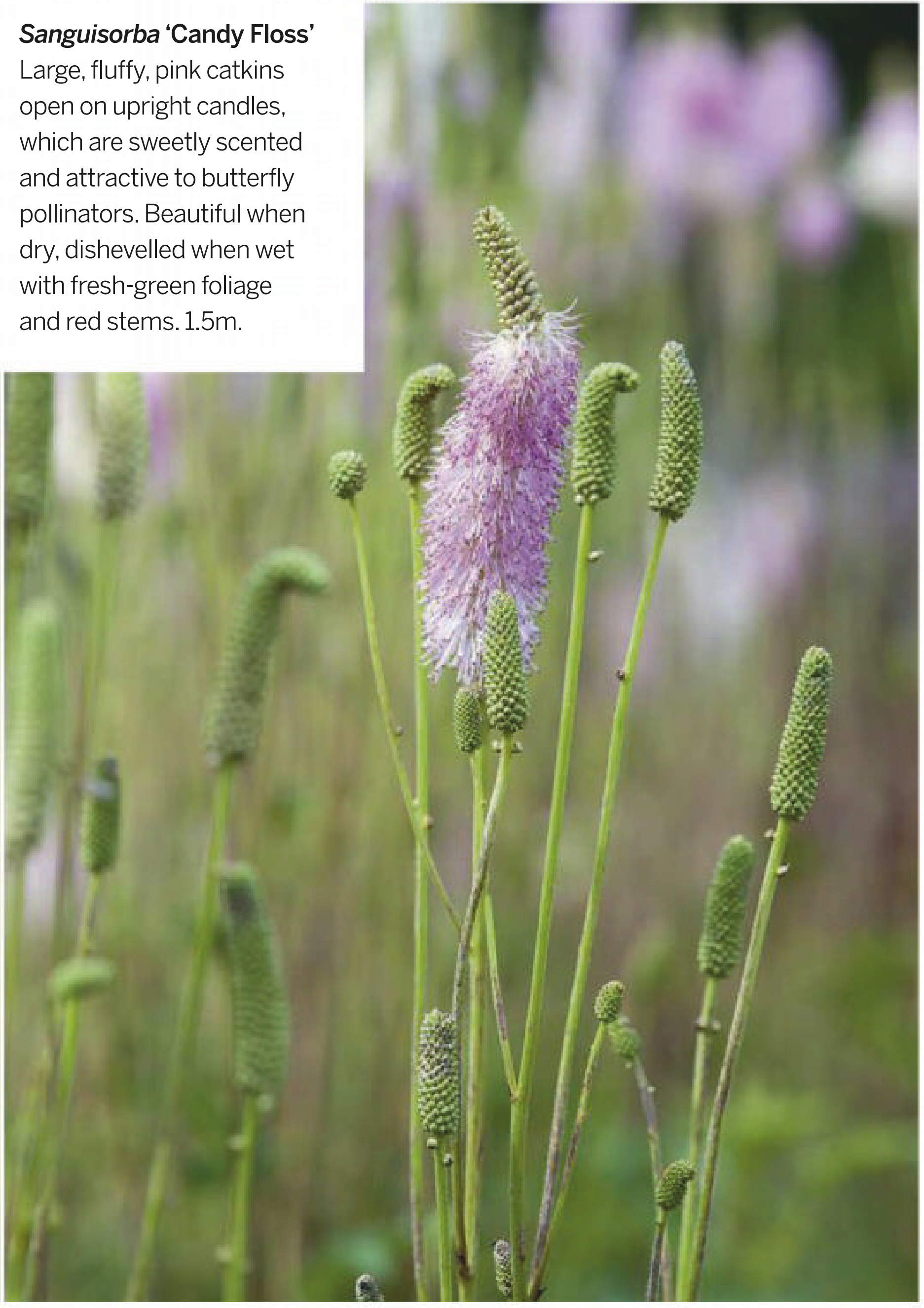
***Sanguisorba* 'Burr Blanc'**
Selected by Graham Gough of Marchants Hardy Plants in East Sussex, this hybrid seedling of *S. tenuifolia* var. *parviflora* has small, slightly nodding white burrs that stay in good condition for months. 1.2m.



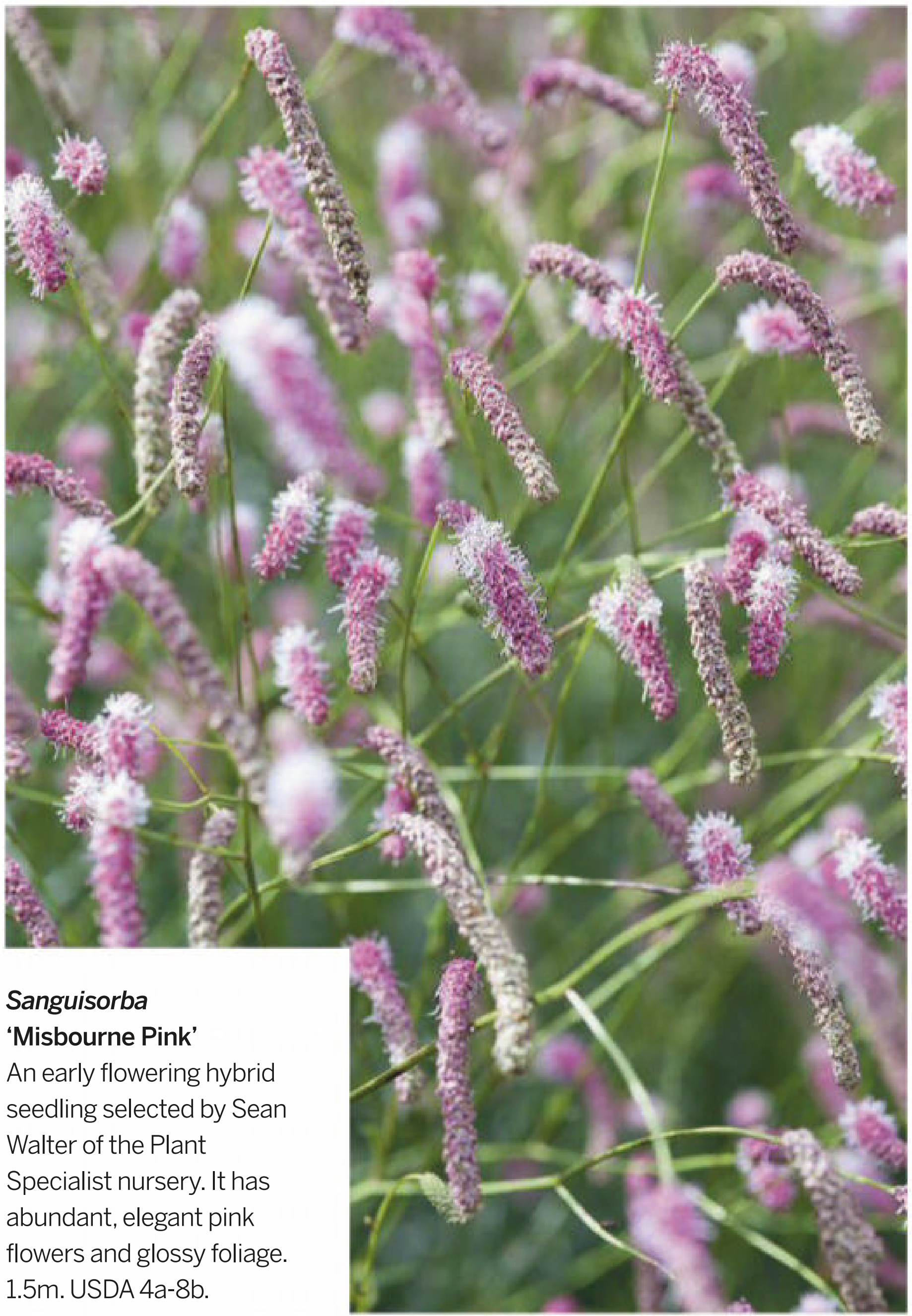
***Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Korean Phoenix'**
Vigorous and floriferous with slender stems, creating substantial clump It's one of the seed samples (CDC 162) collected on the Korean expedition of 1993. 1.2m.



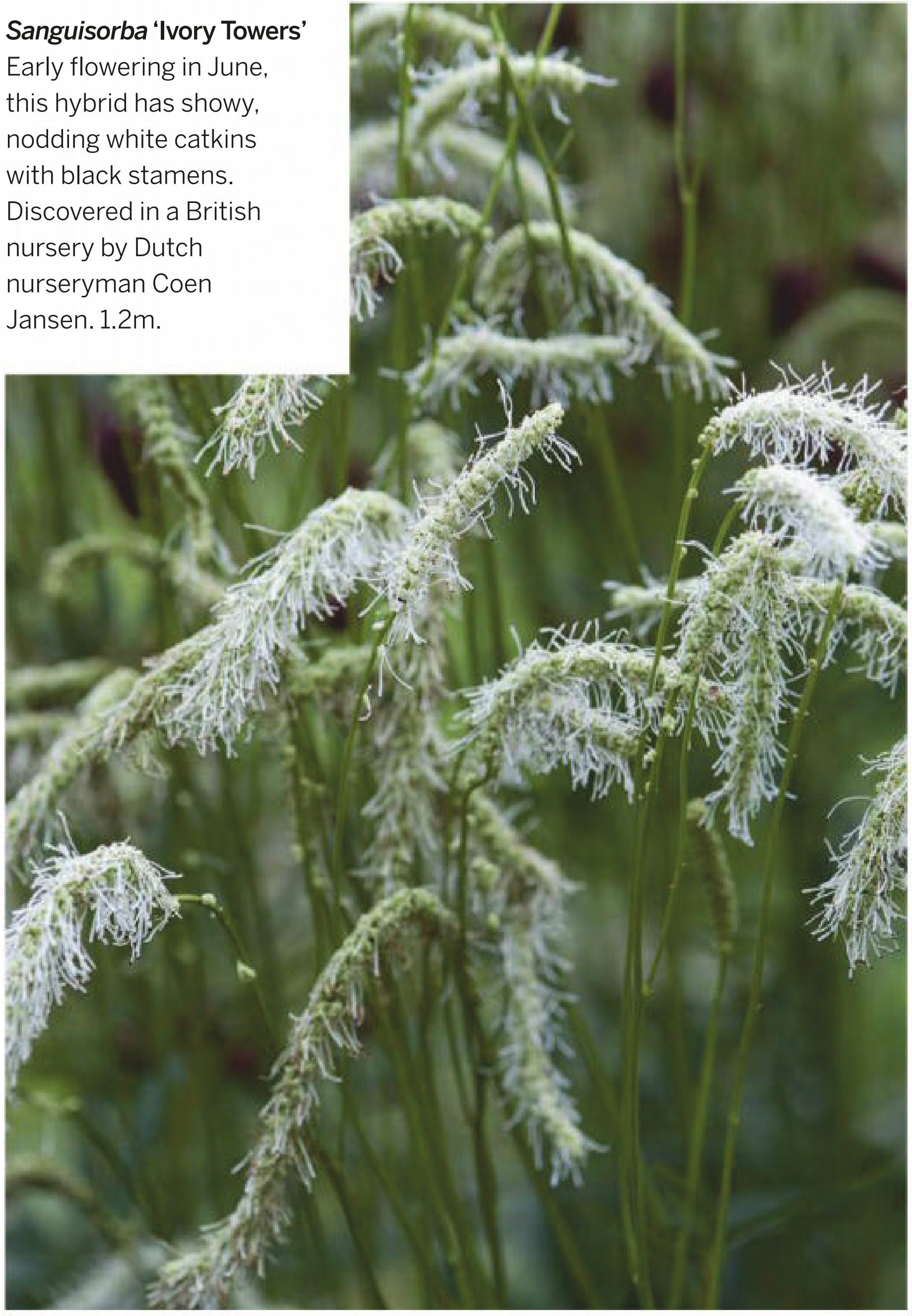
***Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea'**
Smoky-pink, upright elongated burrs appear in late summer on robust stems. It has fresh apple-green foliage and provides a strong vertical accent and a tidy habit. 1.5m.



***Sanguisorba* 'Candy Floss'**
Large, fluffy, pink catkins open on upright candles, which are sweetly scented and attractive to butterfly pollinators. Beautiful when dry, dishevelled when wet with fresh-green foliage and red stems. 1.5m.



***Sanguisorba* 'Misbourne Pink'**
An early flowering hybrid seedling selected by Sean Walter of the Plant Specialist nursery. It has abundant, elegant pink flowers and glossy foliage. 1.5m. USDA 4a-8b.



***Sanguisorba* 'Ivory Towers'**
Early flowering in June, this hybrid has showy, nodding white catkins with black stamens. Discovered in a British nursery by Dutch nurseryman Coen Jansen. 1.2m.

MANY THANKS TO RHS GARDEN WISLEY IN SURREY WHERE MOST OF THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

# Cultivation

Sanguisorbas are easy to propagate by seed, although often erratic to germinate, but they are highly promiscuous and seedlings are likely to be hybrids. Interesting progeny may be produced but can exhibit huge variation. There is also a distinct possibility that seedlings may germinate within a named clump and compromise the original plant if they are more vigorous. This has happened several times with *Sanguisorba* 'Tanna', which is a diminutive floriferous form that should be no taller than 30cm. Many plants offered as *S.* 'Tanna' are 60cm or more and are most likely to be hybrids. Cutting off the spent flowers is one way of avoiding this but denies insects and birds nutritious seed.

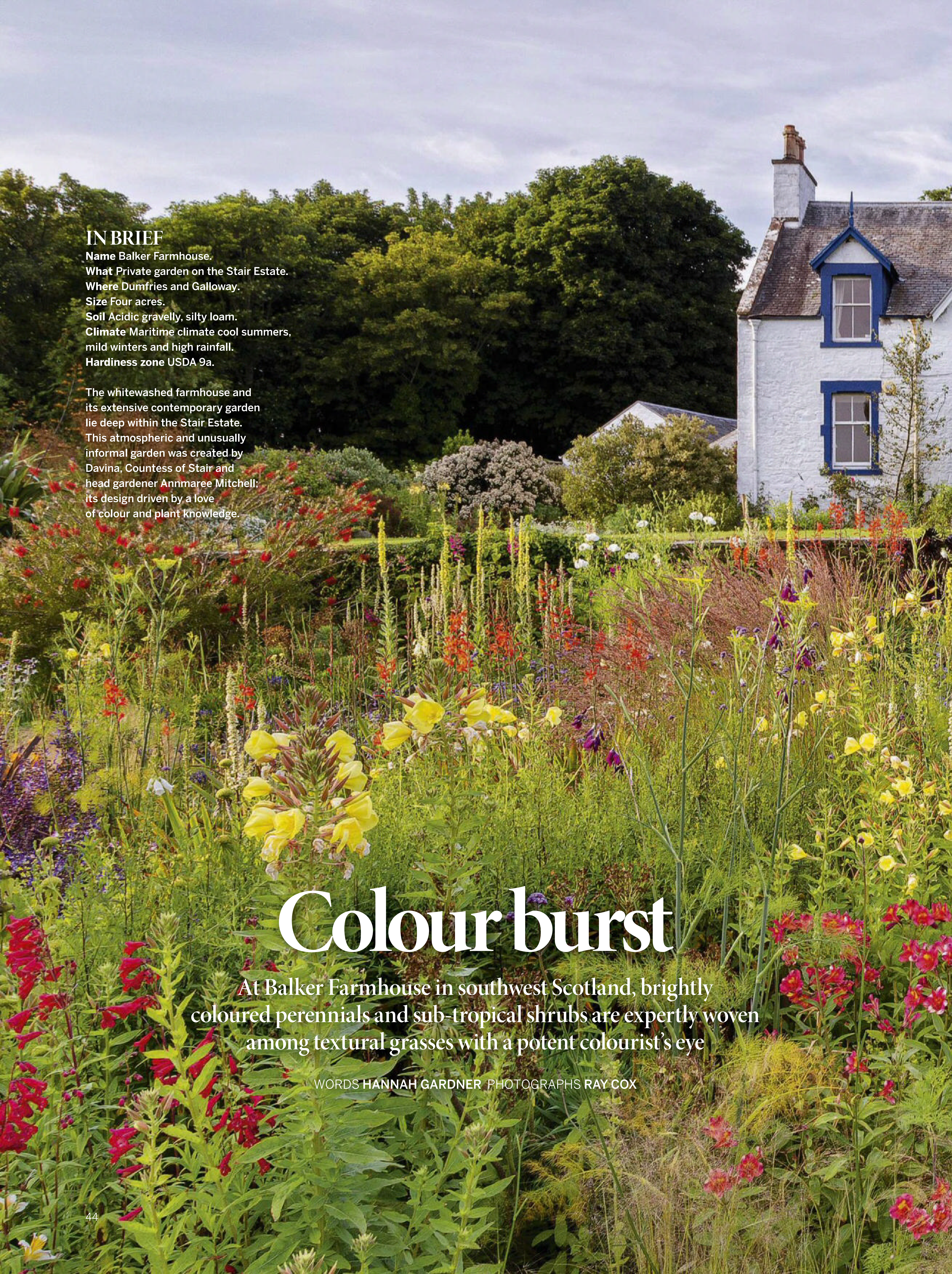
Increasing a clump of a named sanguisorba involves division, most successful in spring when plants are growing away quickly. They have a rhizomatous rootstock and pieces should have a shoot and piece of root attached. A clump can be divided into larger pieces and replanted where required making sure to water in well. Use a sharp kitchen knife to divide plants rather than back to back garden forks, which damage the plant.

In general, sanguisorbas do not suffer greatly from pests and diseases. Like strawberries, they are members of the rose family, and so are susceptible to vine weevils, which burrow into the rhizomes. However, this does not normally cause too much of a problem in a garden situation but is more severe with plants in pots. Black spot is occasionally a problem on some hybrids and powdery mildew can take hold in dry conditions. If mildew is spotted early enough a good soaking with a seaweed feed can prevent further spread as can a dose of an environmentally friendly foliar feed and pesticide, such as SB Plant Invigorator. Deer and rabbits are particularly fond of eating sanguisorbas.

The different shapes and forms of sanguisorba inflorescences work well in meadow and naturalistic plantings as well as in herbaceous borders. Tall grasses and perennials are enhanced by spots of colour that appear to hover around them on the wiry stems of the sanguisorbas. One nurseryman has described *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Arnhem' as 'like a swarm of small raspberries'. The colourful dangling caterpillars of *Sanguisorba hakusanensis*, *Sanguisorba hakusanensis* 'Lilac Squirrel', *Sanguisorba* 'Pink Brushes' and *Sanguisorba* 'Candy Floss' are certainly not subtle. In dry weather they look great; but in wet conditions can look a little bedraggled. Many sanguisorbas exhibit good autumn foliage tints.

# Where to see and buy

- **Avondale Nursery**
  Mill Hill, Baginton,
  Warwickshire CV8 3AG.
  Tel 07367 590620,
  avondalenursery.co.uk
- **RHS Garden Wisley**
  Wisley Lane, Wisley,
  Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.
  Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk
- **Macplants**
  Berrybank Nursery, 5 Boggs
  Holdings, Pencaitland, East
  Lothian EH34 5BA. Tel 01875
  341179, macplants.co.uk
- **Marchants Hardy Plants**
  2 Marchants Cottages Mill
  Lane, Laughton, Lewes,
  East Sussex BN8 6AJ.
  Tel 01323 811737,
  marchantshardyplants.co.uk
- **Phoenix Perennial Plants**
  Tel 01420 560695.
  Open by appointment only
- **Pineview Plants**
  Pineview, 19 Windmill
  Hill, Wroxham Heath,
  Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7SU.
  Tel 01732 882945,
  pineviewplants.co.uk
- **The Plant Specialist**
  7 Whitefield Lane, Great
  Missenden, Buckinghamshire
  HP16 0BH. Tel 1494 866650,
  theplantspecialist.co.uk
- **Sussex Prairie Garden**
  Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf
  Road,nr Henfield, West
  Sussex, BN5 9AT.
  Tel 01273 495902,
  sussexprairies.co.uk



## IN BRIEF

**Name** Balker Farmhouse.
**What** Private garden on the Stair Estate.
**Where** Dumfries and Galloway.
**Size** Four acres.
**Soil** Acidic gravelly, silty loam.
**Climate** Maritime climate cool summers, mild winters and high rainfall.
**Hardiness zone** USDA 9a.

The whitewashed farmhouse and its extensive contemporary garden lie deep within the Stair Estate. This atmospheric and unusually informal garden was created by Davina, Countess of Stair and head gardener Annmaree Mitchell; its design driven by a love of colour and plant knowledge.

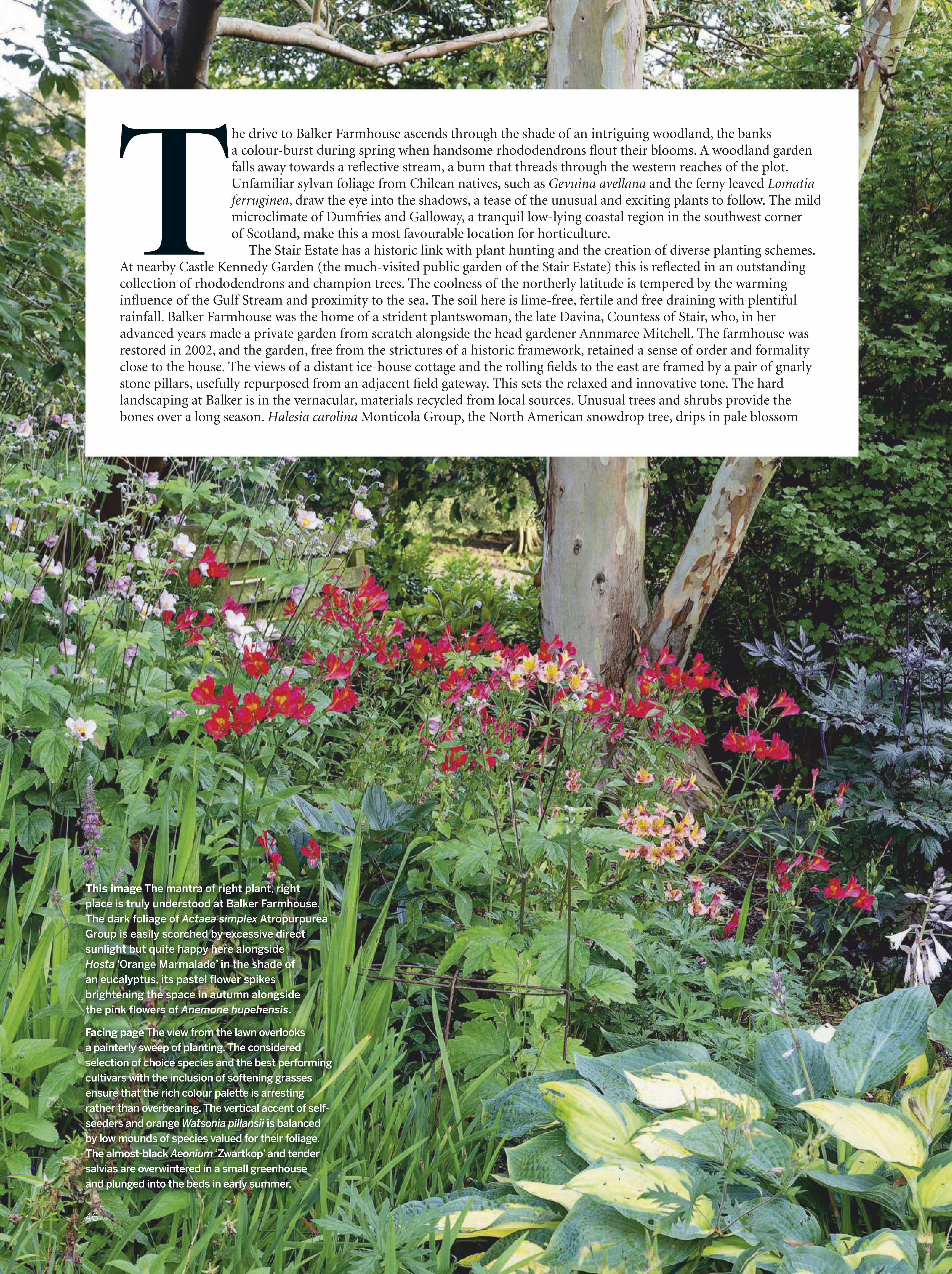
# Colour burst

At Balker Farmhouse in southwest Scotland, brightly coloured perennials and sub-tropical shrubs are expertly woven among textural grasses with a potent colourist's eye

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** PHOTOGRAPHS **RAY COX**

The drive to Balker Farmhouse ascends through the shade of an intriguing woodland, the banks a colour-burst during spring when handsome rhododendrons flout their blooms. A woodland garden falls away towards a reflective stream, a burn that threads through the western reaches of the plot. Unfamiliar sylvan foliage from Chilean natives, such as *Gevuina avellana* and the ferny leaved *Lomatia ferruginea*, draw the eye into the shadows, a tease of the unusual and exciting plants to follow. The mild microclimate of Dumfries and Galloway, a tranquil low-lying coastal region in the southwest corner of Scotland, make this a most favourable location for horticulture.

The Stair Estate has a historic link with plant hunting and the creation of diverse planting schemes. At nearby Castle Kennedy Garden (the much-visited public garden of the Stair Estate) this is reflected in an outstanding collection of rhododendrons and champion trees. The coolness of the northerly latitude is tempered by the warming influence of the Gulf Stream and proximity to the sea. The soil here is lime-free, fertile and free draining with plentiful rainfall. Balker Farmhouse was the home of a strident plantswoman, the late Davina, Countess of Stair, who, in her advanced years made a private garden from scratch alongside the head gardener Annmaree Mitchell. The farmhouse was restored in 2002, and the garden, free from the strictures of a historic framework, retained a sense of order and formality close to the house. The views of a distant ice-house cottage and the rolling fields to the east are framed by a pair of gnarly stone pillars, usefully repurposed from an adjacent field gateway. This sets the relaxed and innovative tone. The hard landscaping at Balker is in the vernacular, materials recycled from local sources. Unusual trees and shrubs provide the bones over a long season. *Halesia carolina* Monticola Group, the North American snowdrop tree, drips in pale blossom



**This image** The mantra of right plant, right place is truly understood at Balker Farmhouse. The dark foliage of *Actaea simplex* Atropurpurea Group is easily scorched by excessive direct sunlight but quite happy here alongside *Hosta* 'Orange Marmalade' in the shade of an eucalyptus, its pastel flower spikes brightening the space in autumn alongside the pink flowers of *Anemone hupehensis*.

**Facing page** The view from the lawn overlooks a painterly sweep of planting. The considered selection of choice species and the best performing cultivars with the inclusion of softening grasses ensure that the rich colour palette is arresting rather than overbearing. The vertical accent of self-seeders and orange *Watsonia pillansii* is balanced by low mounds of species valued for their foliage. The almost-black *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' and tender salvias are overwintered in a small greenhouse and plunged into the beds in early summer.

during spring and *Sorbus* 'Sunshine', a vigorous mountain ash, weighs with in clusters of bright-golden berries late in summer then followed by a show of rich autumn leaf colour. Shapely boulders are strewn down a bank anchoring a collection of sub-tropical shrubs and *Acaena buchananii* a textural groundcover from New Zealand.

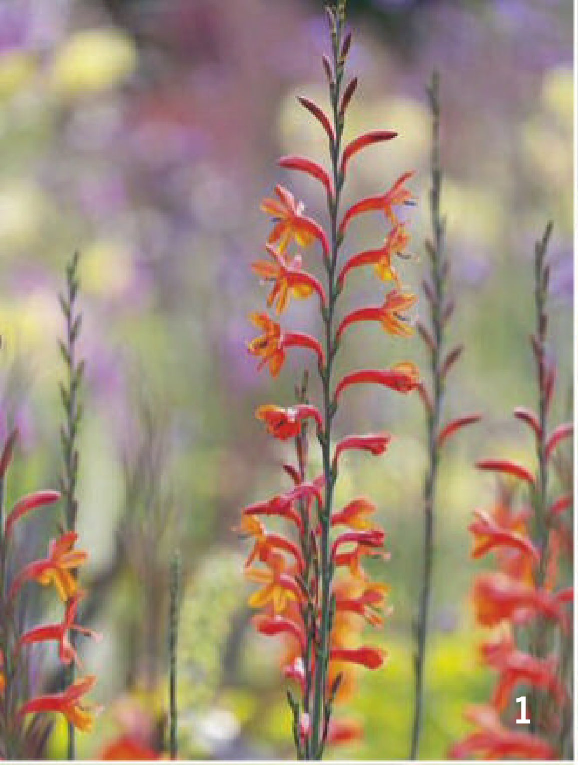
The informal layout is pursued by a series of generously proportioned island borders intersected by meandering paths. From the outset, says Annemaree, "the plants were the stars". Cally Gardens, the nursery started by the intrepid, late plant hunter Michael Wickenden, is nearby and has been an inspiring source of plants. The selective use of grasses creates textural contrast and movement. Rich, jewel-toned perennials are chosen instinctively with a bold colourist's eye. Drifts of crimson antirrhinums and zesty lime nicotianas are threaded through the borders each summer while the spontaneity of self-seeders brings the garden to life.

The garden has been heavily influenced by Beth Chatto and her core philosophy of right plant, right place. The stony nature of the ground discourages slugs and home-made leaf mould, compost and manure are worked through the borders. Once the plants get their feet down they seem to thrive. The borders here have always been experimental and the diverse habitats offered by this garden make it a haven for wildlife – wagtails and goldfinches flit through the canopy – and in winter the deer take advantage of its secluded location and graze the remaining perennials. □

**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**Address** Balker Farmhouse, Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway DG9 8RS. **Tel** 01581 400225/01776 702024.
**Web** scotlandsgardens.org **Open** Occasionally through Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

Turn the page for 12 key plants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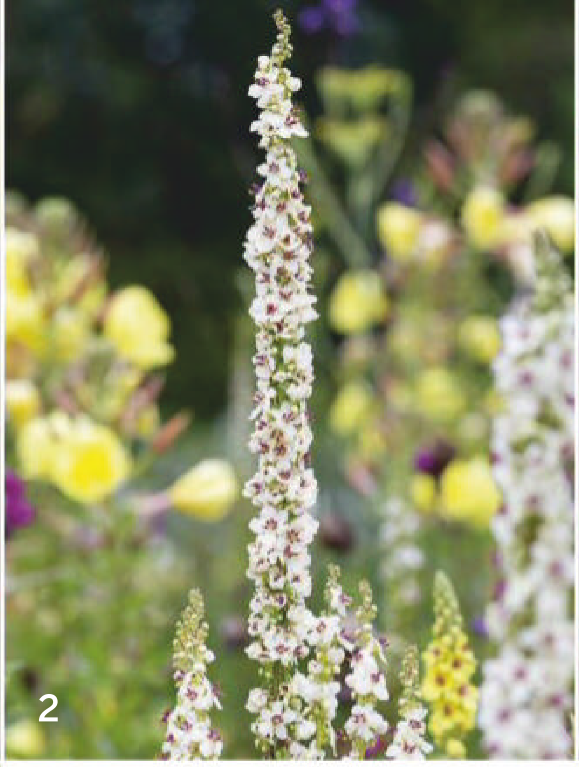
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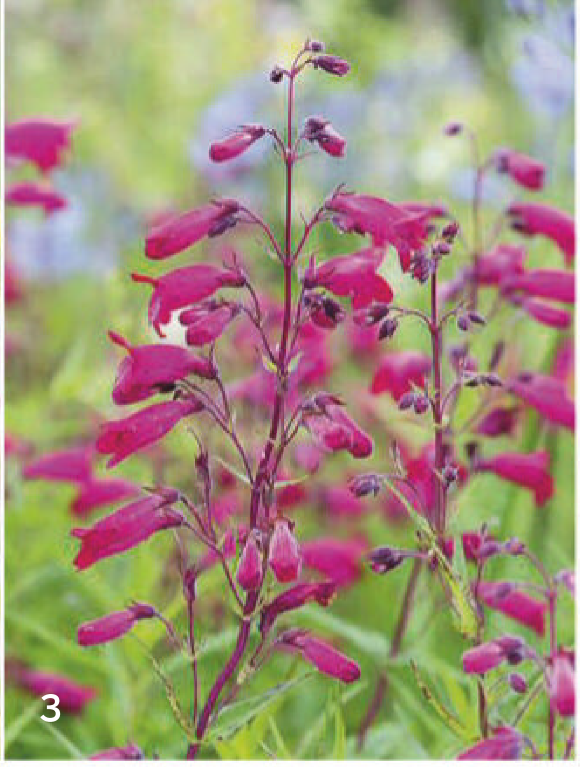
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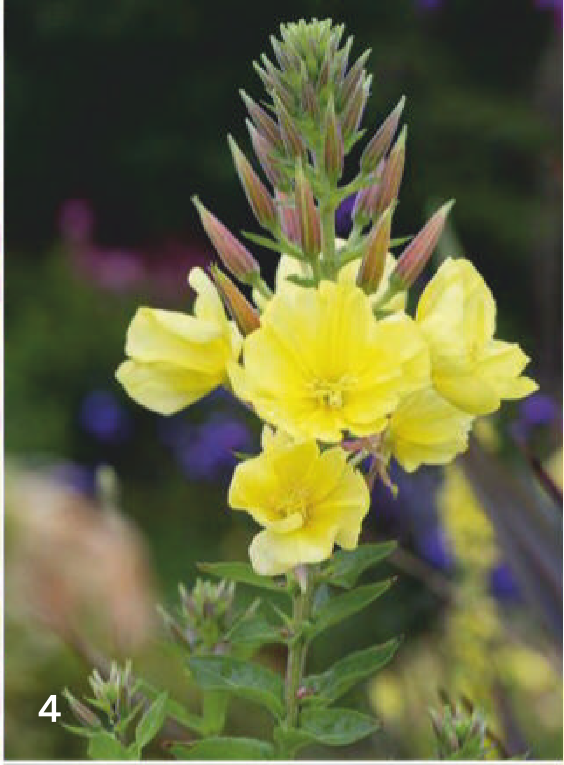
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# 12 KEY PLANTS

**1 *Watsonia pillansii*** A clump-forming rhizomatous perennial from South Africa with sword-shaped leaves and intense orange flowers that are held in handsome spirals on strong, upright stems. Appreciative of full sun. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b[†].

**2 *Verbascum chaixii* 'Album'** A promiscuous and very hardy self-seeding perennial with a basal rosette of architectural leaves and scarcely branched stems tightly massed with white flowers that have an intense purple eye. 75cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

**3 *Penstemon* 'Andenken an Friedrich Hahn'** An elegant and floriferous long-lived perennial from North America with a mass of bold gem-red tubular flowers from July to October. Requires well-drained soil. 80cm. AGM[*]. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

**4 *Oenothera biennis*** This common evening primrose is a tall and showy biennial that self seeds and is always welcome. Its wide saucers of fragrant, lemon-scented yellow flowers scent the evening air. The whole plant is edible. 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

**5 *Impatiens tinctoria*** A vigorous hardy perennial from high-elevation, East African rainforests. Dramatic, orchid-like, white-and-crimson flowers and deeply veined large leaves. Requires part shade and a humus-rich soil. 2m. RHS H3, USDA 10a-11.

**6 *Polemonium yezoense* var. *hidakanum* 'Purple Rain'** A remarkably beautiful and unfussy Jacob's ladder from Hokkaido in Japan with striking, dark foliage. The sprays of lilac flowers are attractive to pollinators, the show prolonged by deadheading. 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

**7 *Kniphofia* 'Sunningdale Yellow'** A clump forming but compact, perennial, red hot poker with dense, slender flowerheads of warm yellow. Does best in full sun and moist but well-drained soil. 90cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

**8 *Lilium pumilum*** A graceful Asian lily with glossy, scarlet, recurved flowers that emit a heady fragrance. Bulbs persist for two to four years in well-drained soils but it flowers in only two years from seed so it's worth saving some. 60cm. USDA 3a-7b.

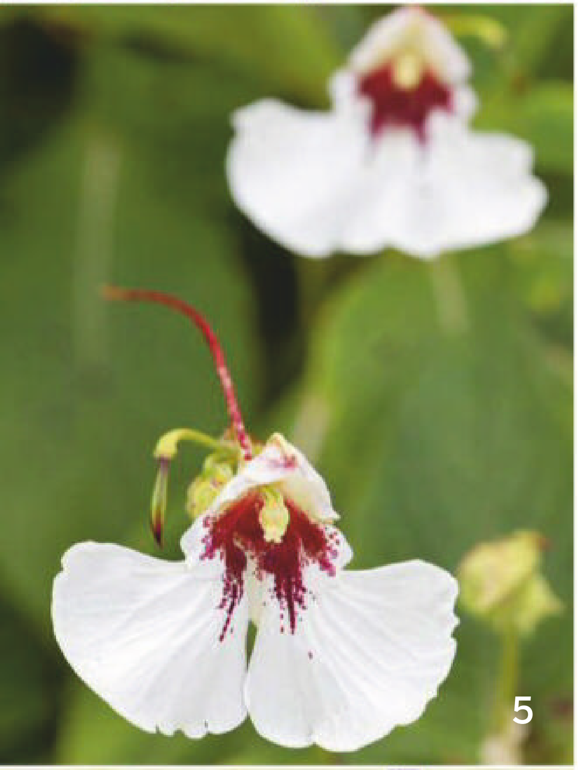
**9 *Dierama pulcherrimum*** The elegant wiry arching stems of the angel's fishing rod emerge in July, the tips weighed with a graceful drooped cluster of silver-pink, bell-like flowers. Needs an open, sunny position. 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

**10 *Lobelia tupa*** A magnificent Chilean perennial, known as devil's tobacco, for sheltered gardens. Robust spires of curious, brick-red, tubular flowers are carried on tall dark stems above distinctive, grey-green foliage. Full sun and deep, moist soil. 1m. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

**11 *Euphorbia wallichii*** An upright bushy and long-flowering spurge that is native to the Himalayas. Offers vibrant, lime-yellow flowerheads from May to August, which together with its fresh foliage will brighten any border. Fully hardy, it needs full sun. 60cm. USDA 6a-9b.

**12 *Alstroemeria* Indian Summer (= 'Tesronto')** A mid-height perennial with exotic, fiery orange-red flowers and contrasting chocolate brown foliage. An excellent cut flower. Needs full sun to part shade. Mulch generously to overwinter until established. 60cm.

[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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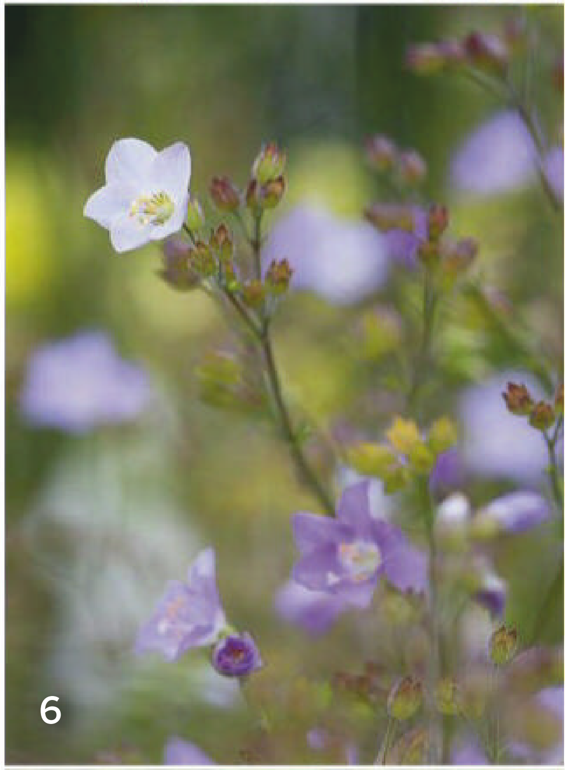
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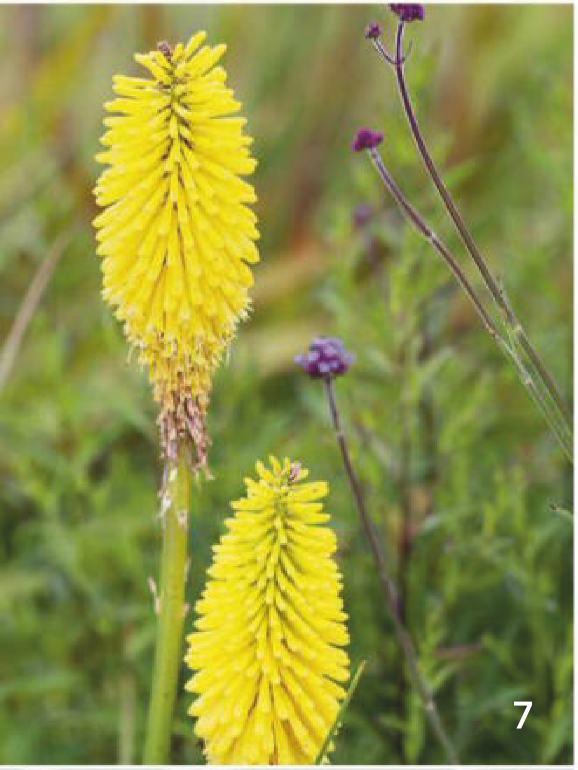
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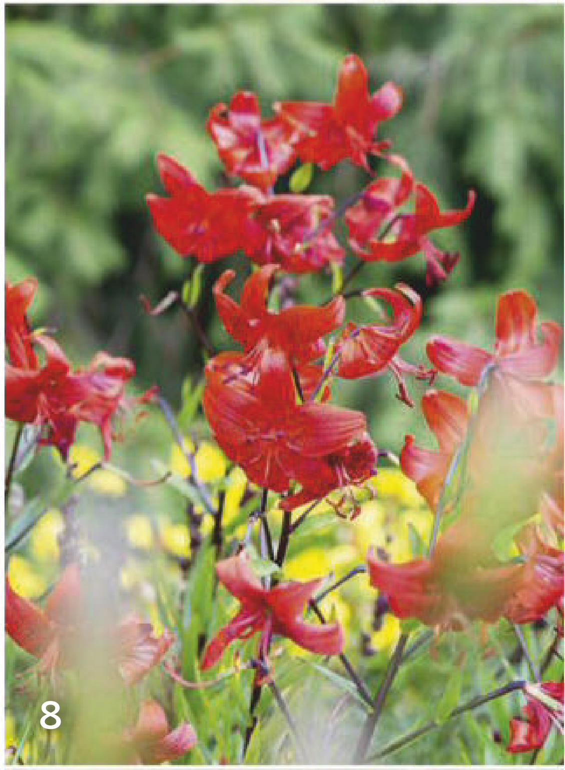
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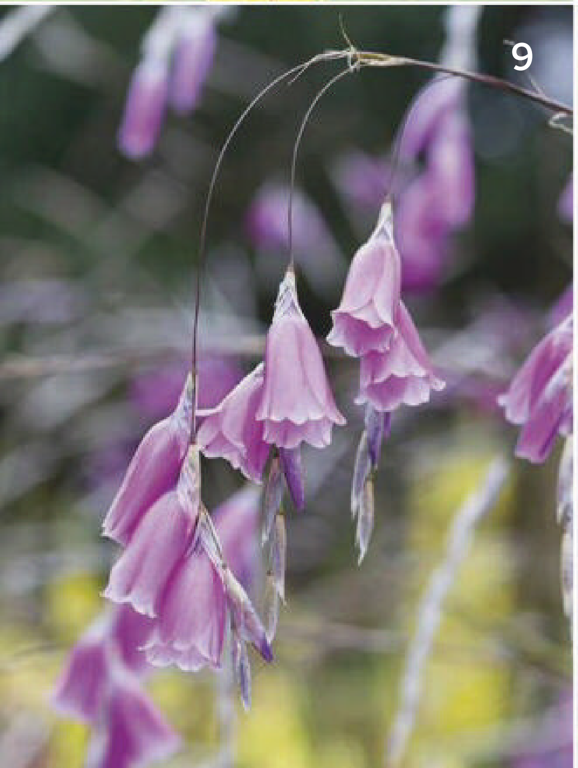
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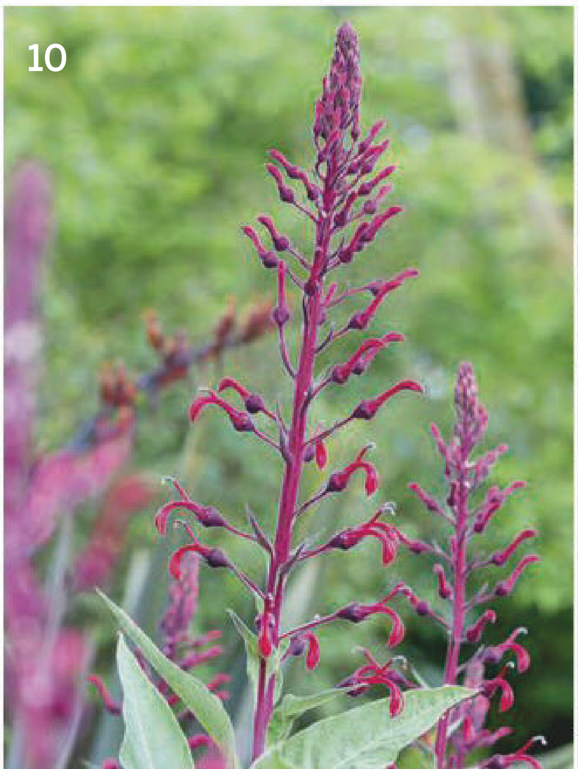
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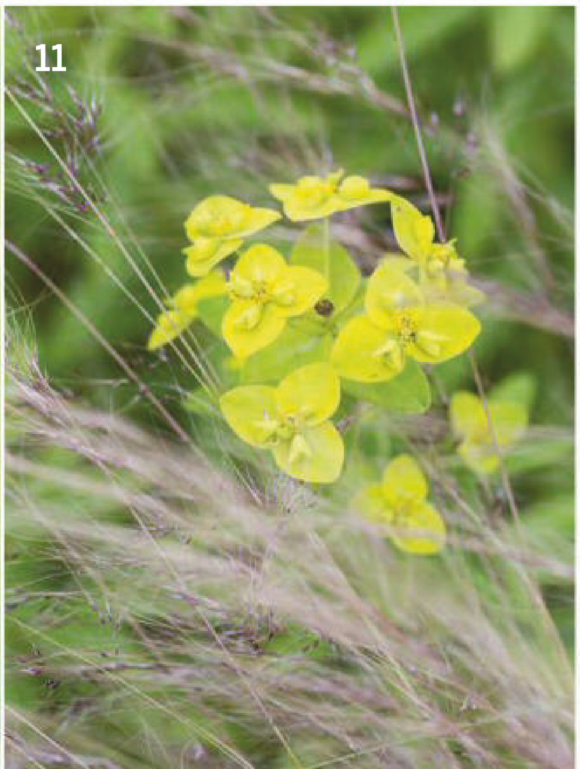
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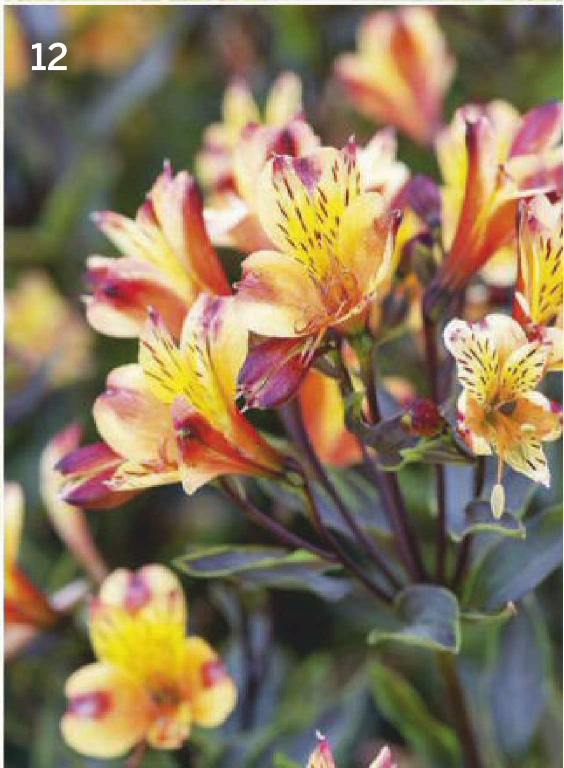
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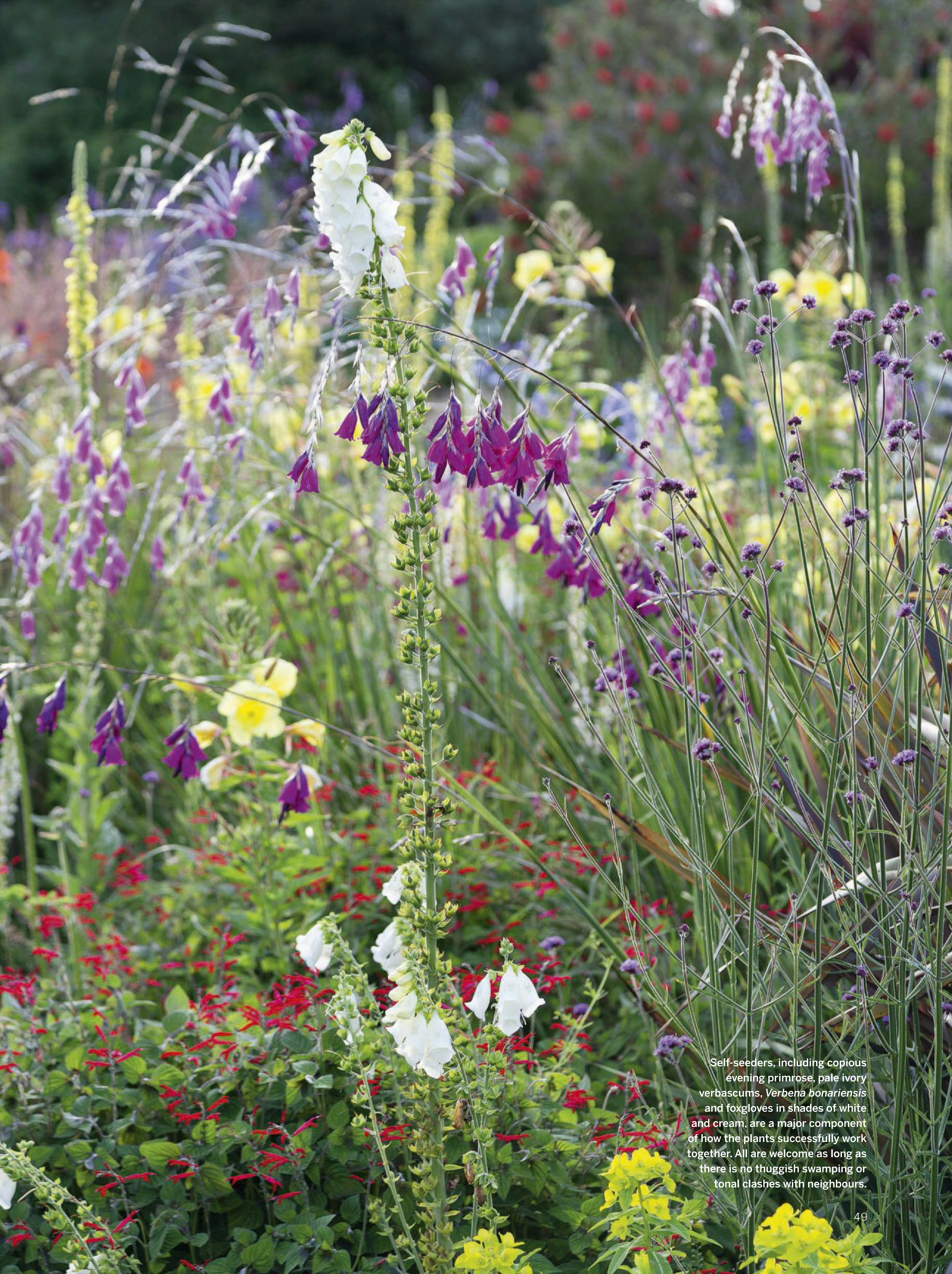


Self-seeders, including copious evening primrose, pale ivory verbascums, *Verbena bonariensis* and foxgloves in shades of white and cream, are a major component of how the plants successfully work together. All are welcome as long as there is no thuggish swamping or tonal clashes with neighbours.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

# ARIT ANDERSON

The *Gardeners' World* presenter on how a butler's sink full of herbs took her from a career in fashion and holistic therapies to helping solve the nation's garden design dilemmas

WORDS JODIE JONES PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

In 2010, at the age of 44, Arit Anderson moved from a flat in north London to the southwest of the city in search of riverside walks, a greener life and her very first garden. "I liked the idea of pottering around with plants after a hectic day in the office, although I had no idea what to do with it."

Today she is a familiar face on BBC *Gardeners' World* and other programmes, with her own successful garden design practice, and plans to improve the environmental impact of the whole landscaping profession. "Design wasn't part of a plan," she says. "I have never even thought of myself as being artistic."

Born in London, Arit grew up in a lively, happy house in Hertforshire's green belt, with four foster sisters and a brother, her birth sister Lisa, and a single mother who was far too busy looking after her extensive brood to have any spare time for gardening.

NO ONE THOUGHT I WOULD GO FROM FASHION BUNNY TO GARDENER

At school, Arit considered becoming a haematologist, until dissections put her off taking biology A level. Instead, she decided to become a pharmacy technician, but soon realised she wasn't suited for a job that would never allow her to be a decision maker. "I'm not scared of change, so I walked into an employment agency to see what was available, and they offered me a customer admin role at the headquarters of Country Casuals ladies' clothing brand."

For the next 25 years, barring a brief detour into events management, Arit worked for a variety of fashion retailers, and reached senior management level. "I've always loved fashion so I really enjoyed being part of that world although, throughout that period, I also studied and practised part time in a range of alternative therapies.

"Holistic therapies have interested me since my early twenties. I'm a qualified masseuse and reflexologist, I've taught hot and cold stone therapy and studied crystal and spiritual healing at the Vibrational Healing Foundation and the College of Psychic Studies," she says. "My drive to help others is second nature."

It's not an obvious career path for a gardening television presenter. "No one thought I would go from fashion bunny to gardener. But I always said I didn't want to do fashion at 50, and my new garden was giving me so much joy that I thought that might be a sign.

"It all began with a butler's sink. I put three herbs in and was amazed when they didn't die. Soon I was buying a plant here and a plant there and discovered that I loved it. I ended 2011 sitting on the end of my bed thinking 'I'm going to be a gardener' – although by 1 January 2012, it dawned on me that I really knew absolutely nothing about gardening!"

She enrolled on a garden design course at Capel Manor and took a job in retail consultancy that would provide an income while giving her the flexibility to study. "From then on my life was chaos. I had to keep my drawing board in the back of the car so I could work on college projects wherever the job took me, but I loved every minute of it."

A year later Arit, along with fellow students Anna Murphy and Sarah Jarman, won the Fresh Talent competition at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and in 2016 she was awarded a gold medal at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show for a conceptual garden that highlighted the need for renewable energies and how climate change might impact the future of gardens.

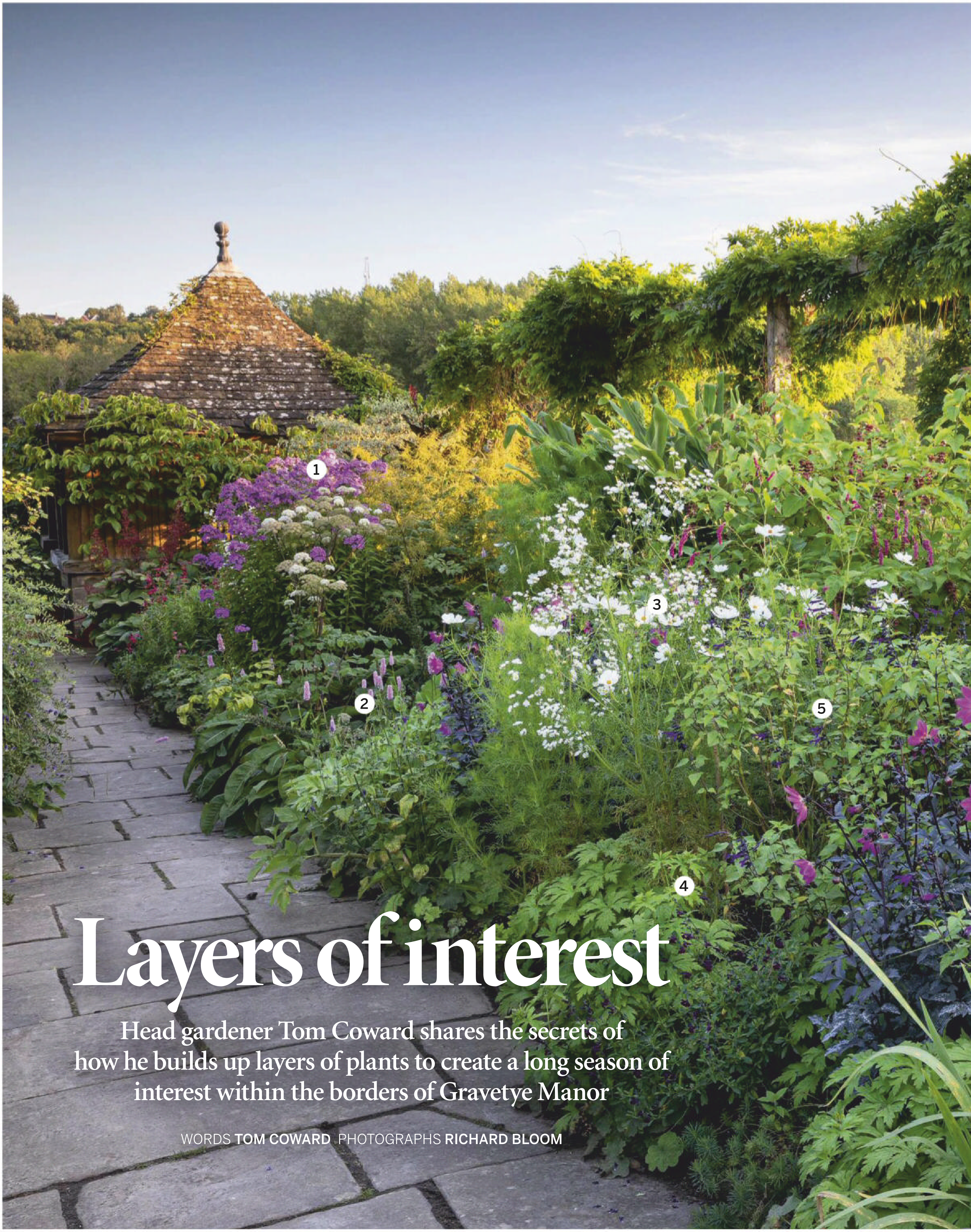
"My first appearance on television was talking about that garden. At that moment I certainly wasn't thinking about a career as a presenter but, on reflection, I saw it could be a way to satisfy my growing desire to teach, while designing gardens for paying clients," she says. "To be honest, appearing on television can be a bit daunting. I am never going to know as much as Monty or Carol, but maybe my value is exactly the fact that I am a late starter. I understand how it feels when you don't even know where to begin. And I have also proved that you can succeed if you are prepared to have a go."

These days Arit feels much more relaxed in front of the cameras, but what she really appreciates is the platform her TV profile has given her to promote the causes close to her heart. "I have things to say that are relevant to everyone. The effect of climate change on the planet, is quite literally on our back doors, and people need help to know how to combat it. I am so grateful I have had the chance to talk on screen about the need to reduce the use of plastic in our gardens, and on the power of the natural world to protect and restore our mental health. These things really matter," she says.

"I used to think it was a bit random that I ended up being a television garden designer, but when I look back at everything I've done, I can see a path that leads directly to this point, and from here on into the future."

**USEFUL INFORMATION**

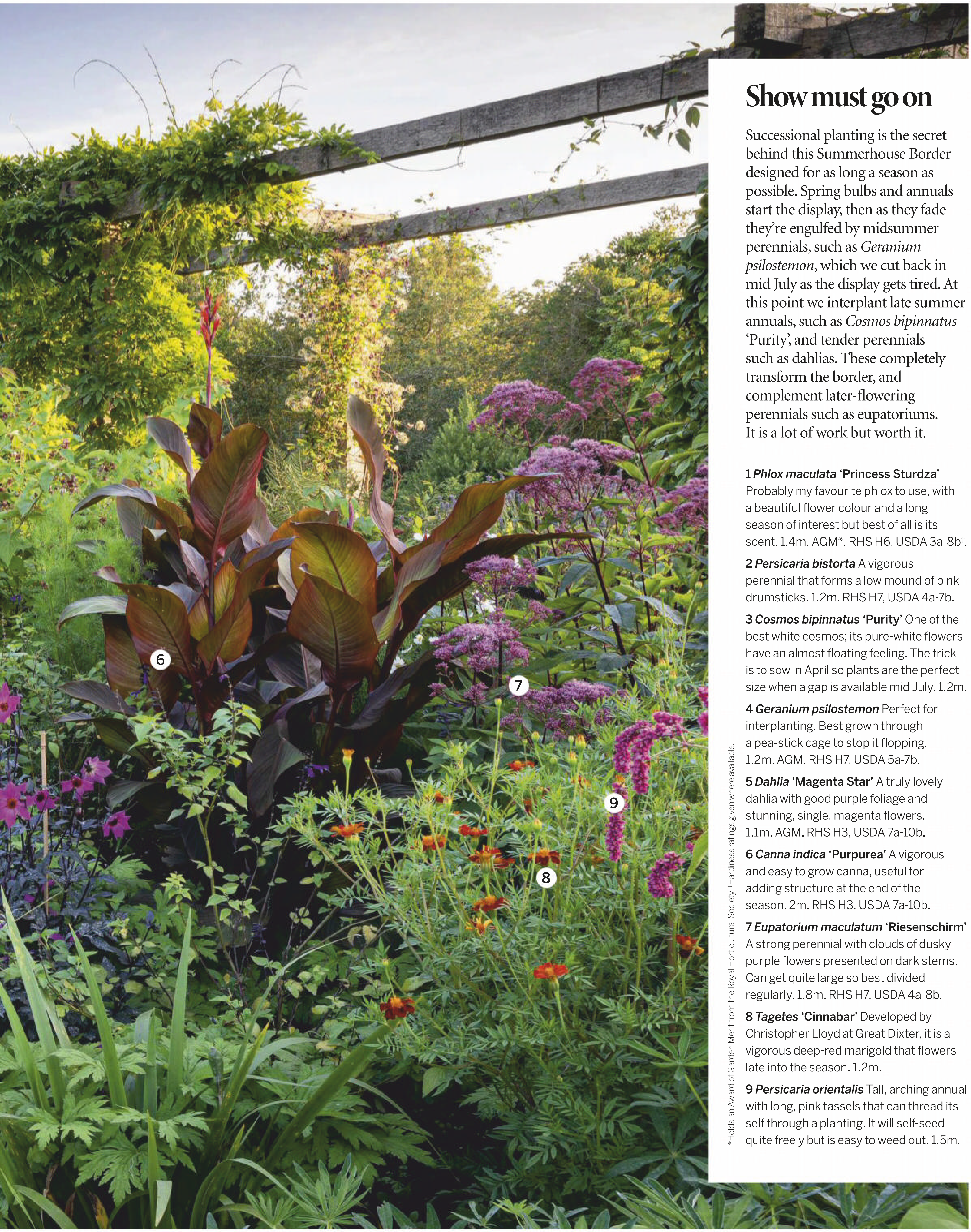
The current series of *Gardeners' World* continues on BBC Two on Fridays at 8pm until the end of October.



# Layers of interest

Head gardener Tom Coward shares the secrets of how he builds up layers of plants to create a long season of interest within the borders of Gravetye Manor

WORDS **TOM COWARD** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



# Show must go on

Successional planting is the secret behind this Summerhouse Border designed for as long a season as possible. Spring bulbs and annuals start the display, then as they fade they're engulfed by midsummer perennials, such as *Geranium psilostemon*, which we cut back in mid July as the display gets tired. At this point we interplant late summer annuals, such as *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity', and tender perennials such as dahlias. These completely transform the border, and complement later-flowering perennials such as eupatoriums. It is a lot of work but worth it.

**1 *Phlox maculata* 'Princess Sturdza'** Probably my favourite phlox to use, with a beautiful flower colour and a long season of interest but best of all is its scent. 1.4m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b[†].

**2 *Persicaria bistorta*** A vigorous perennial that forms a low mound of pink drumsticks. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

**3 *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Purity'** One of the best white cosmos; its pure-white flowers have an almost floating feeling. The trick is to sow in April so plants are the perfect size when a gap is available mid July. 1.2m.

**4 *Geranium psilostemon*** Perfect for interplanting. Best grown through a pea-stick cage to stop it flopping. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-7b.

**5 *Dahlia* 'Magenta Star'** A truly lovely dahlia with good purple foliage and stunning, single, magenta flowers. 1.1m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

**6 *Canna indica* 'Purpurea'** A vigorous and easy to grow canna, useful for adding structure at the end of the season. 2m. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

**7 *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Riesenschirm'** A strong perennial with clouds of dusky purple flowers presented on dark stems. Can get quite large so best divided regularly. 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

**8 *Tagetes* 'Cinnabar'** Developed by Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter, it is a vigorous deep-red marigold that flowers late into the season. 1.2m.

**9 *Persicaria orientalis*** Tall, arching annual with long, pink tassels that can thread its self through a planting. It will self-seed quite freely but is easy to weed out. 1.5m.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available.

# Dry shade challenge

The dark-green foliage of the yew tree at the back of this border is a perfect backdrop to the planting, but it creates quite challenging, dry, shady conditions. *Rosa glauca* is an anchor plant, and one of the loveliest roses in the garden. Its arching red stems are handsome in the winter and in June it has pretty, single pink flowers that in late summer are replaced by small red hips. I especially like planting pink flowers alongside it to show off the rose's pretty pink petioles.

**1 *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'September Charm'** Dry shade becomes a problem closer to the roots of the yew and anemones perform particularly well in this situation. They can spread quite quickly and so do need to be dug out once they threaten to take over. 90cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

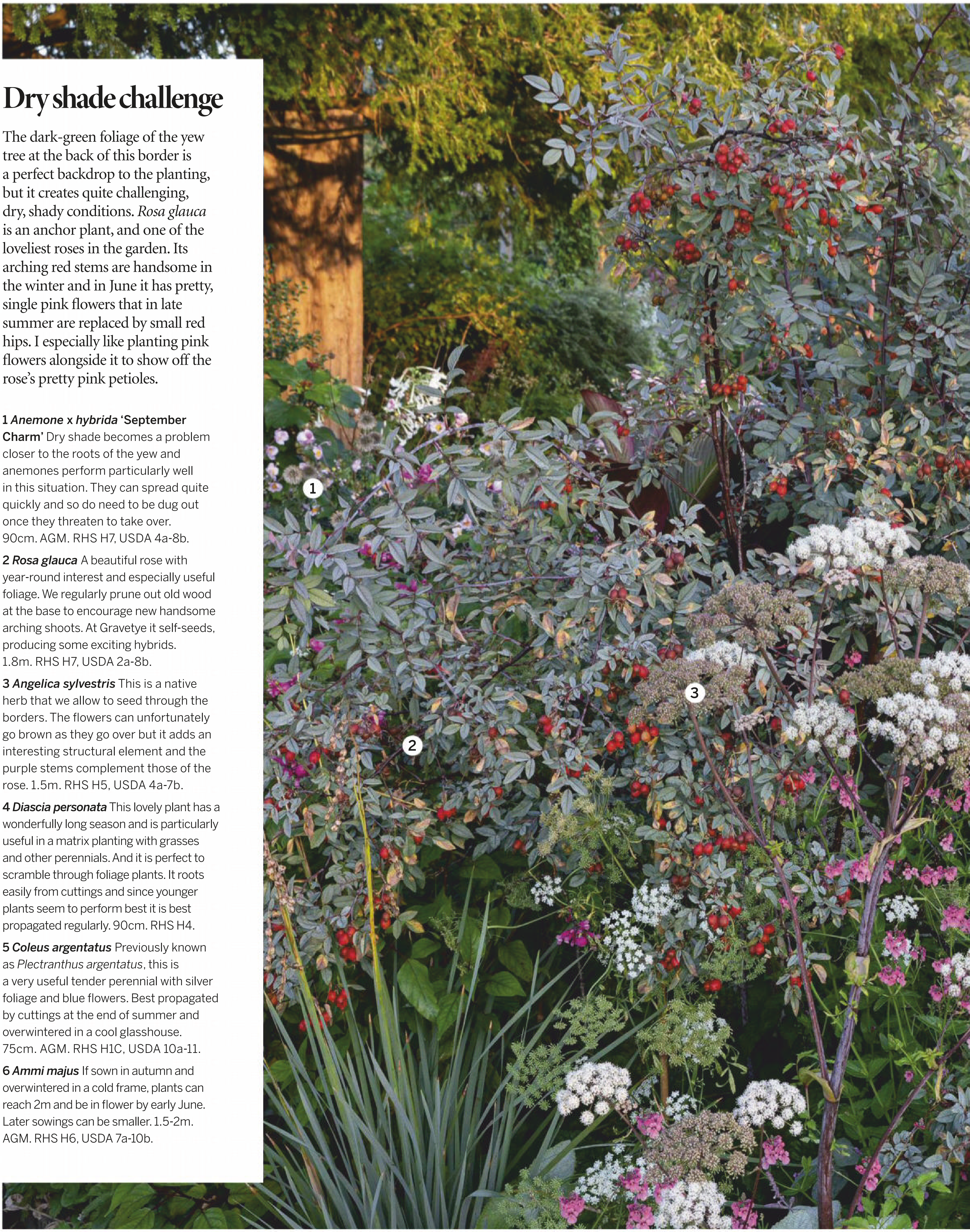
**2 *Rosa glauca*** A beautiful rose with year-round interest and especially useful foliage. We regularly prune out old wood at the base to encourage new handsome arching shoots. At Gravetye it self-seeds, producing some exciting hybrids. 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 2a-8b.

**3 *Angelica sylvestris*** This is a native herb that we allow to seed through the borders. The flowers can unfortunately go brown as they go over but it adds an interesting structural element and the purple stems complement those of the rose. 1.5m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

**4 *Diascia personata*** This lovely plant has a wonderfully long season and is particularly useful in a matrix planting with grasses and other perennials. And it is perfect to scramble through foliage plants. It roots easily from cuttings and since younger plants seem to perform best it is best propagated regularly. 90cm. RHS H4.

**5 *Coleus argentatus*** Previously known as *Plectranthus argentatus*, this is a very useful tender perennial with silver foliage and blue flowers. Best propagated by cuttings at the end of summer and overwintered in a cool glasshouse. 75cm. AGM. RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.

**6 *Ammi majus*** If sown in autumn and overwintered in a cold frame, plants can reach 2m and be in flower by early June. Later sowings can be smaller. 1.5-2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 7a-10b.



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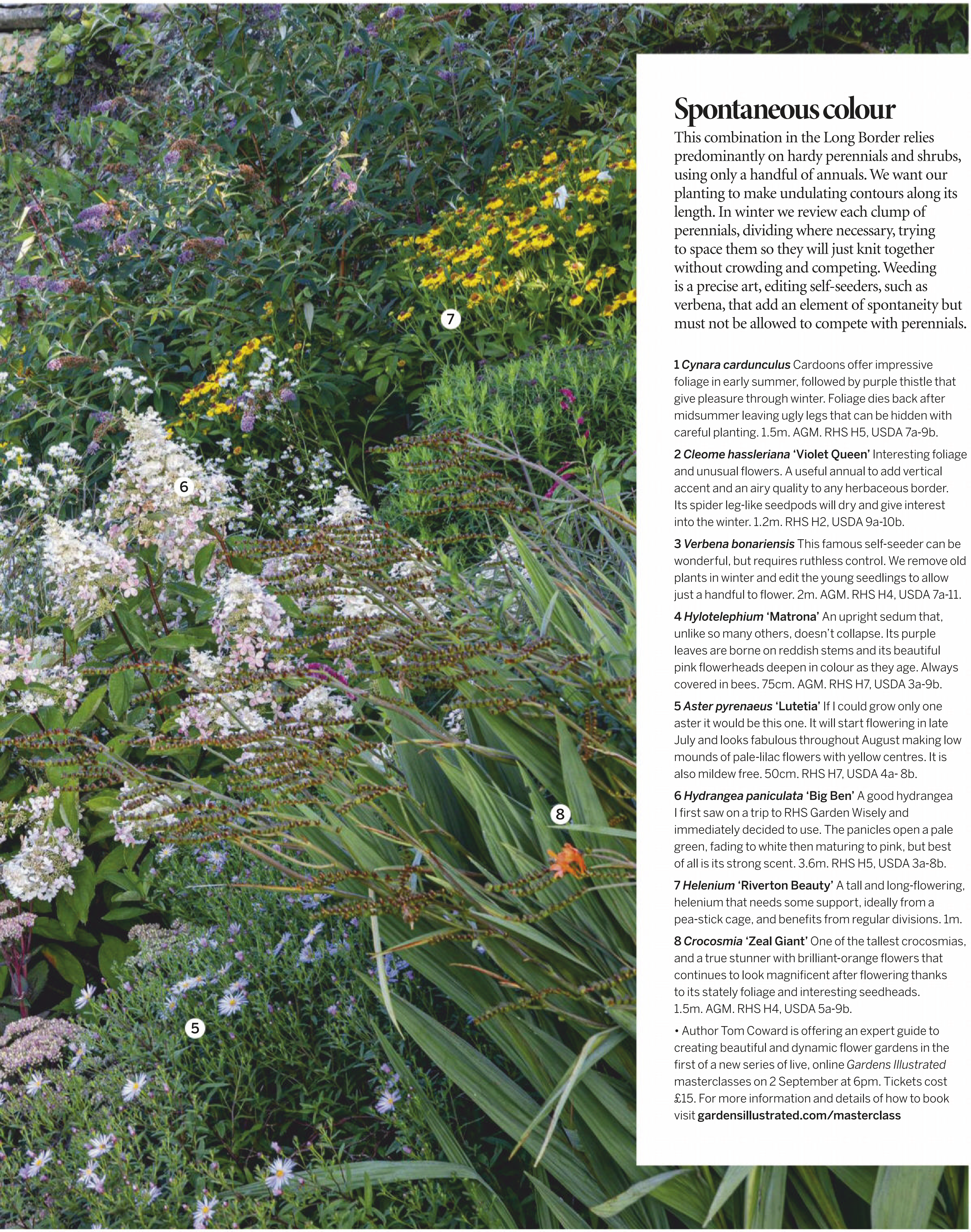

## Spontaneous colour

This combination in the Long Border relies predominantly on hardy perennials and shrubs, using only a handful of annuals. We want our planting to make undulating contours along its length. In winter we review each clump of perennials, dividing where necessary, trying to space them so they will just knit together without crowding and competing. Weeding is a precise art, editing self-seeders, such as verbena, that add an element of spontaneity but must not be allowed to compete with perennials.

1 ***Cynara cardunculus*** Cardoons offer impressive foliage in early summer, followed by purple thistle that give pleasure through winter. Foliage dies back after midsummer leaving ugly legs that can be hidden with careful planting. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

2 ***Cleome hassleriana*** **'Violet Queen'** Interesting foliage and unusual flowers. A useful annual to add vertical accent and an airy quality to any herbaceous border. Its spider leg-like seedpods will dry and give interest into the winter. 1.2m. RHS H2, USDA 9a-10b.

3 ***Verbena bonariensis*** This famous self-seeder can be wonderful, but requires ruthless control. We remove old plants in winter and edit the young seedlings to allow just a handful to flower. 2m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-11.

4 ***Hylotelephium*** **'Matrona'** An upright sedum that, unlike so many others, doesn't collapse. Its purple leaves are borne on reddish stems and its beautiful pink flowerheads deepen in colour as they age. Always covered in bees. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

5 ***Aster pyrenaeus*** **'Lutetia'** If I could grow only one aster it would be this one. It will start flowering in late July and looks fabulous throughout August making low mounds of pale-lilac flowers with yellow centres. It is also mildew free. 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a- 8b.

6 ***Hydrangea paniculata*** **'Big Ben'** A good hydrangea I first saw on a trip to RHS Garden Wisely and immediately decided to use. The panicles open a pale green, fading to white then maturing to pink, but best of all is its strong scent. 3.6m. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

7 ***Helenium*** **'Riverton Beauty'** A tall and long-flowering, helenium that needs some support, ideally from a pea-stick cage, and benefits from regular divisions. 1m.

8 ***Crocosmia*** **'Zeal Giant'** One of the tallest crocosmias, and a true stunner with brilliant-orange flowers that continues to look magnificent after flowering thanks to its stately foliage and interesting seedheads. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

- Author Tom Coward is offering an expert guide to creating beautiful and dynamic flower gardens in the first of a new series of live, online *Gardens Illustrated* masterclasses on 2 September at 6pm. Tickets cost £15. For more information and details of how to book visit **gardensillustrated.com/masterclass**

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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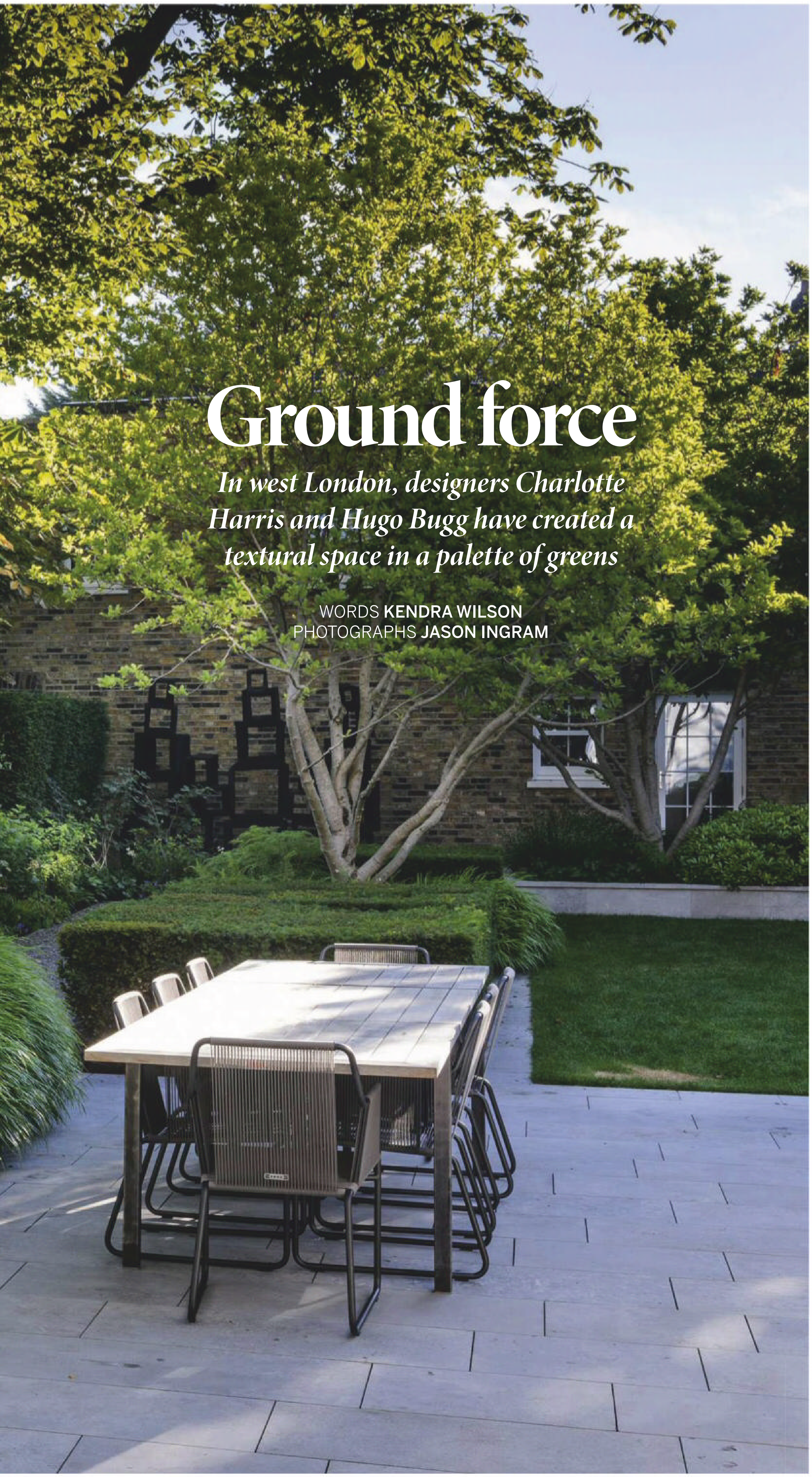
# Small gardens

*From a city meadow to an all-green space, three urban sanctuaries packed with stylish ideas*

JASON INGRAM, MARIANNE MAJERUS



# Ground force

*In west London, designers Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg have created a textural space in a palette of greens*

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON**
PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

## KEY ELEMENTS

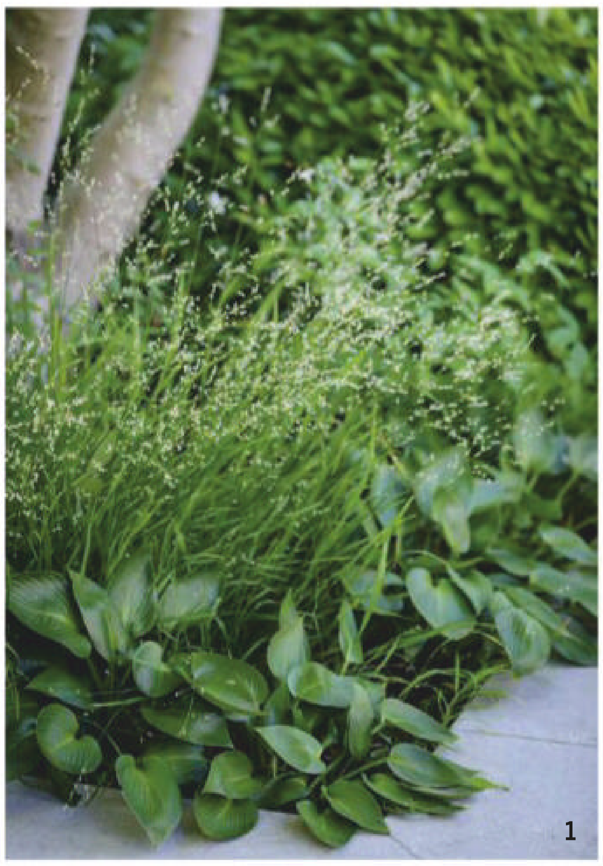
**What** Residential garden.
**Where** West London.
**Soil** Topsoil brought in, after extensive building works and excavation.
**Size** 15m x 6m (back), 15m x 30m (front).
**Aspect** Northeast facing.
**Special features** A garden with height and structure built over an excavated basement.
**Designed by** Harris Bugg Studio (harrisbugg.com).

A good sweep with a brush works wonders for a small garden, but neatness alone will not make it interesting, which is especially apparent when everything can be seen at a glance. Gardens come alive with leaf textures, tree shapes, considered materials and beautifully made structures; the kind of elements you would expect to see in a show garden. This is easier said than done, unless you were to hire the young design duo Harris Bugg Studio, whose individual RHS Chelsea Flower Show gardens have shown a solid understanding of medal-winning design.

Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg announced their partnership at Chelsea in 2017, just before Charlotte won a gold medal for her first outing at the show – Hugo had won gold two years earlier. Now, their team of seven is split between London and Exeter. Over the past three years, the pair have amassed a fearless array of projects from roof terraces and country estates, to vast undertakings such as the National Trust's Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire and the walled garden at the new RHS Garden Bridgewater, near Manchester.

The garden that wraps around this Victorian villa in west London was completed two years ago, after large-scale building and engineering works on the property. A basement extends under the lawn, while an underground connecting duct leads to a mews at the back. These factors naturally presented some challenges to Charlotte and Hugo, who were tasked with making a year-round garden with plenty of ▷

Multi-stemmed *Carpinus betulus*, underplanted with *Epimedium* x *versicolor* 'Sulphureum', fill raised beds of patinated bronze, with cascades of *Hakonechloa macra* further down. The fountain (made by Bamber Wallis), is surrounded by droplet-like flowers of *Melica altissima* 'Alba'.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**Clockwise from top left**
The garden uses a largely green and white planting palette that encompasses a variety of textures and leaf shapes, including **(1)** *Hosta* 'Devon Green' combined with the delicate, white grain-like flowers of *Melica altissima* 'Alba'; **(2)** the umbellifer *Cenolophium denudatum*; **(3)** the soft pink and white flowers of *Tiarella* 'Spring Symphony' with the hart's tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium;* **(4)** multi-stemmed *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Merrill'; and **(5)** *Rodgersia pinnata* offering a contrast of foliage with the fern *Dryopteris affinis* 'Cristata'.

**Right below**
A pale-grey terrace creates a cool counterpoint to the green planting. Charlotte and Hugo often use Yorkstone in town gardens but here chose a textured limestone with fossils in its surface that connects to the greying iroko hardwood chairs.

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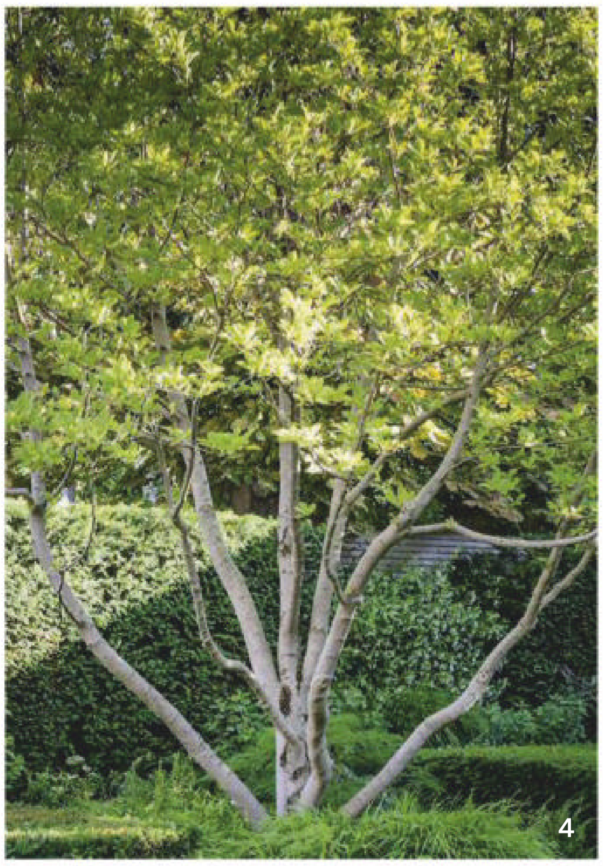
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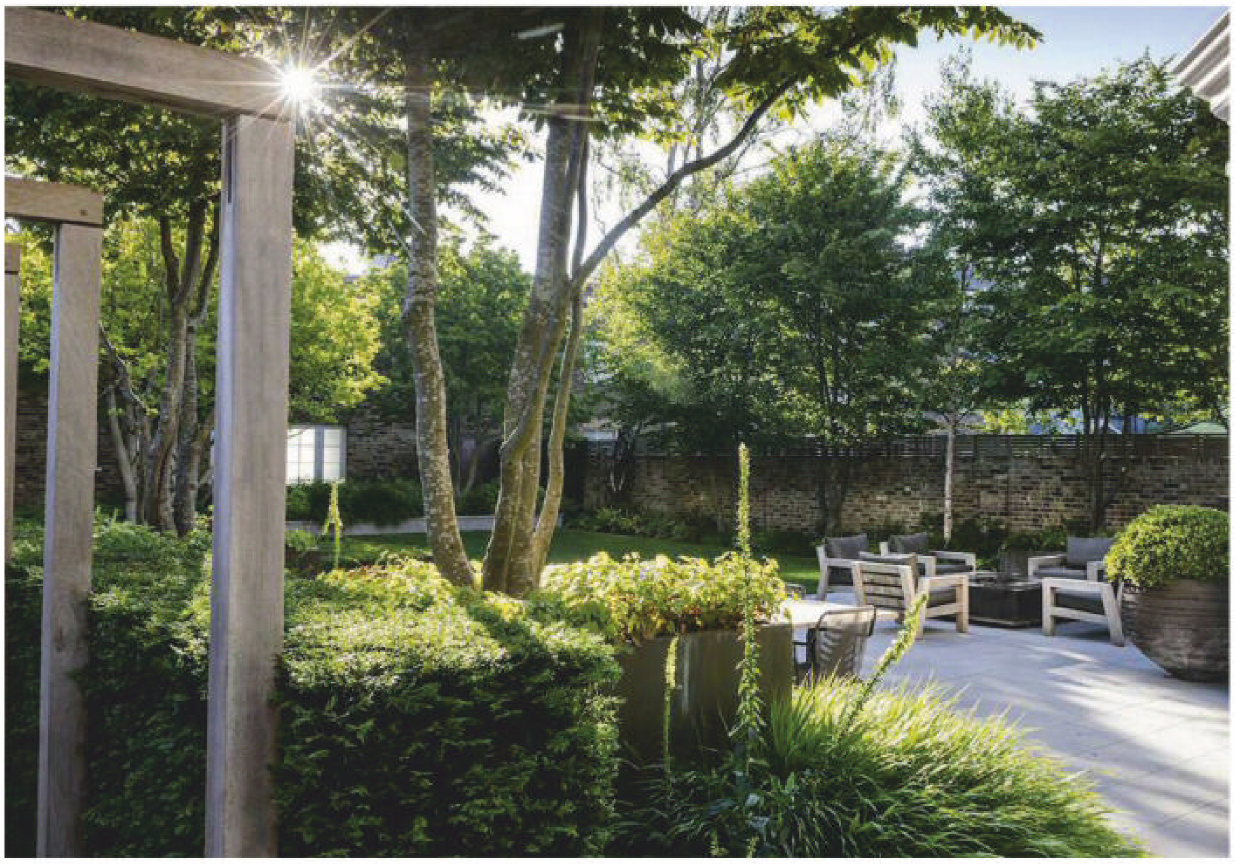
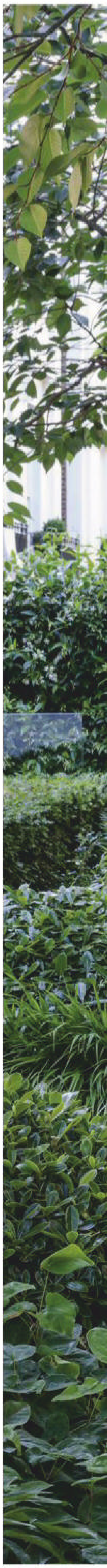
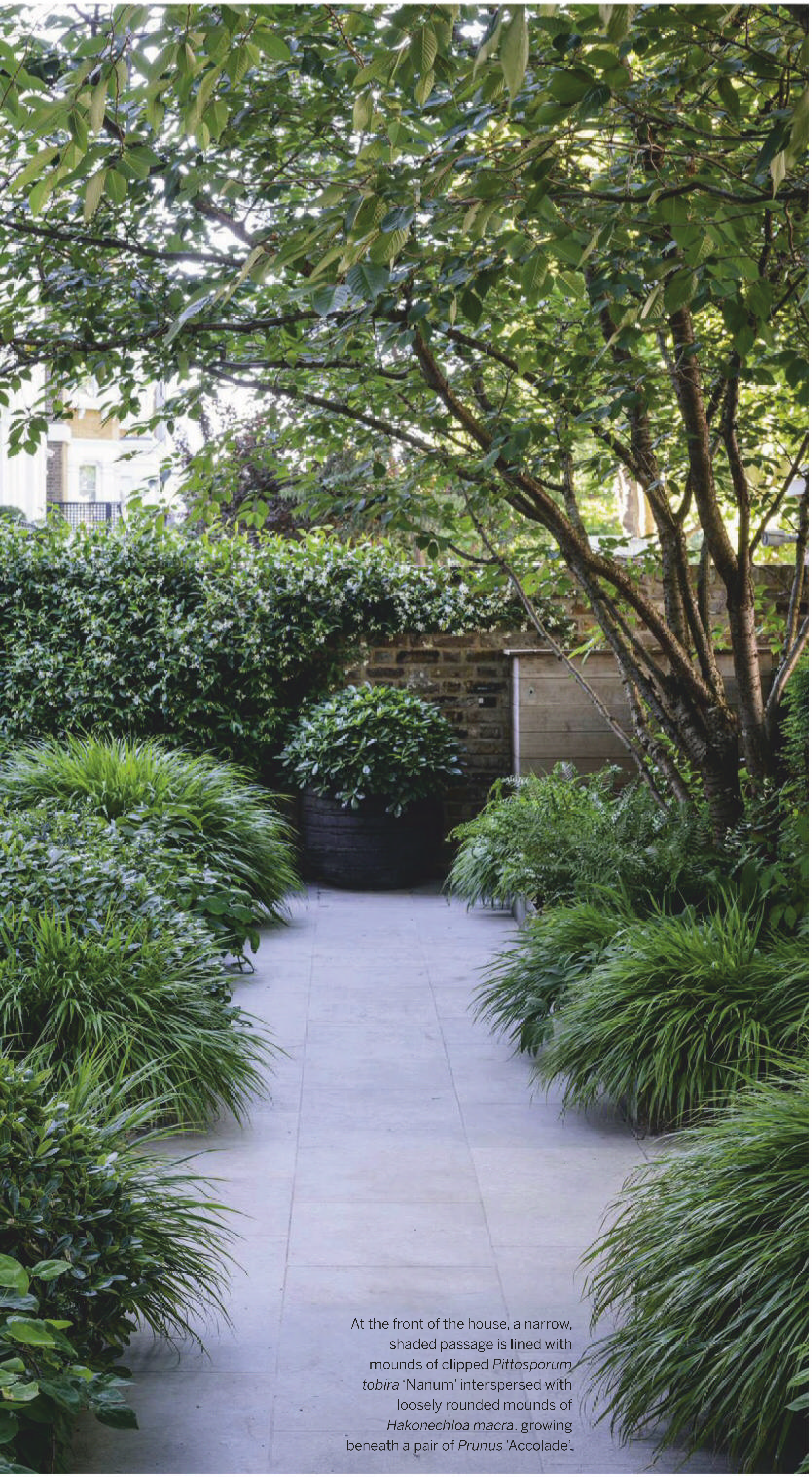
## Surface details

Ideas to help compensate for lack of soil depth

- **Raised beds** don't have to be a choice between rustic-style sleepers or industrial Corten steel. They could pick up other elements in the garden – the patinated bronze used here complements the weathered wood of the pergola.
- **Smaller trees** can add height without necessarily needing depth. These hornbeams and magnolias have rootballs of 1.1m and 2m respectively. Both are gently cut back twice a year to restrict growth.
- **A pergola** adds essential height and can be used to add vertical planting. Left unplanted, as here, it looks modern and can support annuals in summer.
- **Planting against a house or wall**, will also add height but if that's not an option as was the case in this garden, then invest in good-looking, oversized pots for clipped evergreens.
- **Furniture that weathers well,** such as the iroko lounge chairs used here, are good-looking and add sculptural proportions to the garden.
- **A lawn** needs drainage but it doesn't need depth.







At the front of the house, a narrow, shaded passage is lined with mounds of clipped *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' interspersed with loosely rounded mounds of *Hakonechloa macra*, growing beneath a pair of *Prunus* 'Accolade'.

# This is a garden full of vitality and vertical structure, aided by a series of raised planters in patinated bronze

▷ structure and greenery, that would suit the elegance of the house while also accommodating goal posts for two boys.

The latter part was probably the easiest, since pittosporums in huge pots don't mind being hit by balls, and a flat-lawn football pitch will sit happily over a basement extension. Depth restrictions posed more of a problem for trees and shrubs. Added to this, planting under one of the boundary walls was prohibited because it was underpinned during restoration, and similarly, there was to be no planting against the house. Nevertheless, this is a garden full of vitality and vertical structure, aided by a series of raised planters in patinated bronze.

Twelve new trees, their root balls specially restricted for life in a tight space, were deposited by crane into the back garden. Three *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Merrill' and numerous *Carpinus betulus* occupy the raised beds and are also planted in the ground where restrictions allow. The mainly green plant palette is foliage heavy, with reds coming from stems and leaves, and pink and white supplied by weeks of pale *Tiarella* 'Spring Symphony', pink flower spires of *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Chocolate Wing' and frothy *Gillenia trifoliata*.

Walkways are yew-lined, placed at varying distances from the brick wall to create a rhythm, that is syncopated. A series of yew cubes are broken by a flop of grasses under a magnolia. Narrow yew hedges make room for a resolutely spare, modern pergola, free of planting but finished with subtle ironwork, which is carried into the details of bespoke door latches, the firepit and a gently burbling fountain, all designed by Harris Bugg Studio. Hard materials are as important, and interesting, as trees and leaves. "They are all connected and form the bones of the garden," says Charlotte. "It's got to look as beautiful in January as it does in summer." ❑

# Natural choices

*For a renovated chapel, designer Jane Brockbank has created a gravel garden with a naturalistic feel*

WORDS **MATT COLLINS** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

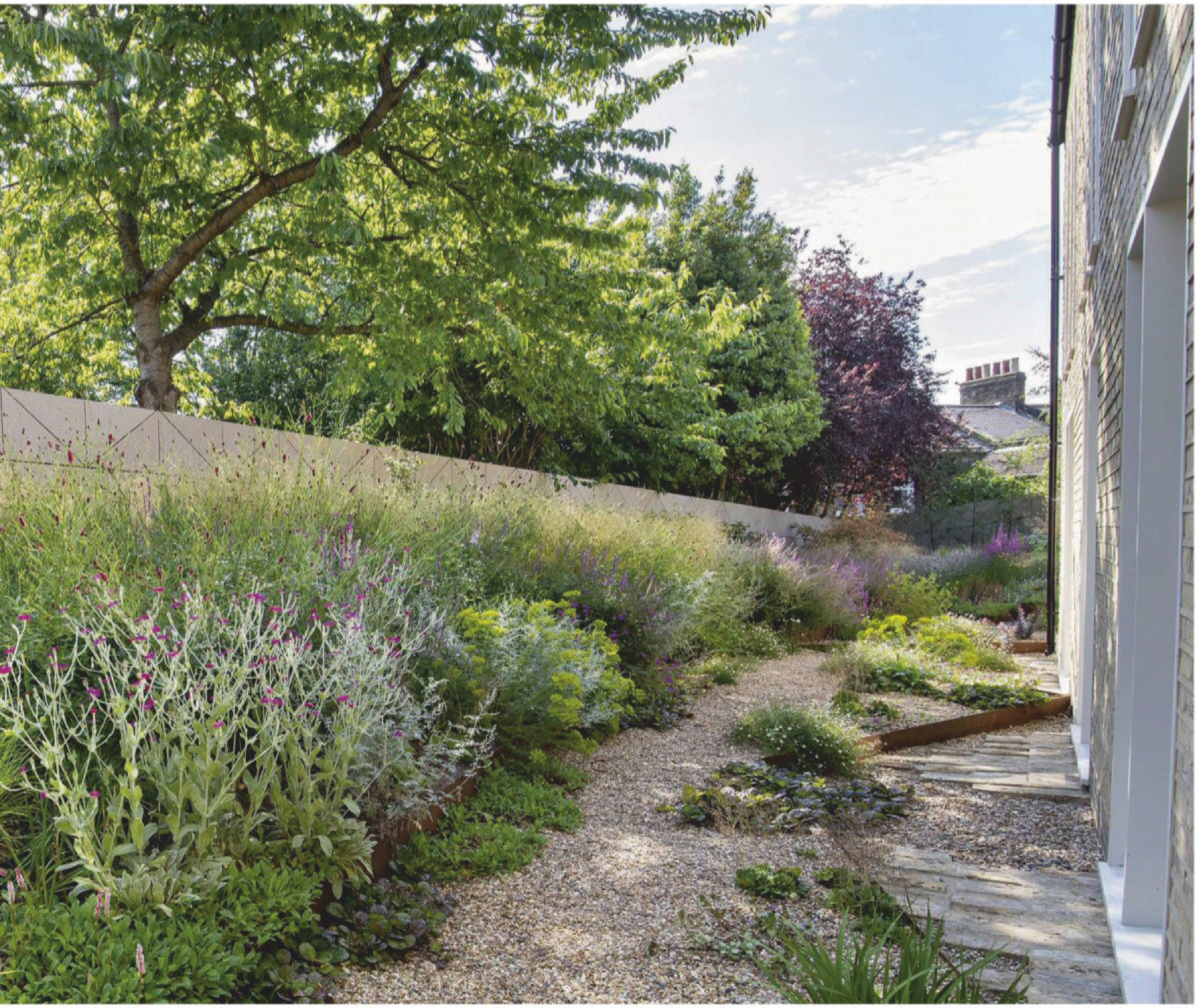
## KEY ELEMENTS

**What** City garden.
**Where** South London.
**Soil** London clay.
**Size** 35m x 13m.
**Aspect** Southeast facing.
**Special features** Naturalistic planting in a zonal configuration with mixed border, wildflower lawn and gravel planting.
**Designed by** Jane Brockbank Gardens (janebrockbank.com).

Down an unlikely side alley in south London lies a most enviable refuge: a fusion of tranquil informality and high concept rarely exhibited in city gardens. Lucid *Lychnis coronaria* and *Salvia nemorosa* 'Amethyst' tumble over Corten steel, while a lawn-cum-meadow, rich with bedstraw and buttercup, flows from a boundary of light-filtering trees and climbing shrubs. This serene landscape was conceived by garden designer Jane Brockbank, working with Craftworks (formerly John Smart Architects) to unite house and garden through angular patterns, bespoke vistas and, despite its limited size, contrasting zones.

With the house – a once-derelict, unconsecrated chapel – progressively remodelled to include an open-plan living space, modern Gothic ceiling and eccentric nods to its ecclesiastical history, Jane had the opportunity to create a bold garden with textures, seasonal change and views of relaxed wildness seen through the building's picture frame windows. "I had fun," says Jane. "The high-faceted architecture forced me to work in a different way, dividing the planting into quite clear, different sections."

These sections are composed of tessellated triangular shapes that mirror the chapel's design; some are intensely planted for colour while others remain neutral. The latter, for example, comprise a simple mix of white astrantias and moor grass (*Sesleria autumnalis*); complementary plants that move with the breeze. Other zones include an airy bank of *Stipa gigantea*; tall Antarctic beech (*Nothofagus antarctica*) and Swedish birch (*Betula pendula* 'Laciniata') texturally underplanted with



*Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* and *Epimedium* x *rubrum*, and a gravel section studded with spreading perennials such as *Ajuga reptans*, *Lamium maculatum* 'Beacon Silver' and pink sea thrift. The centrepiece – if there is such a thing in a garden of triangles – is a formal seating terrace surrounded by a great swathe of jubilant repeat planting: tall sanguisorbas, bright *Lythrum virgatum* 'Rosy Gem' and the acid-green umbellifer *Zizia aurea*. Nestled towards the back are establishing feature shrubs of guelder rose, *Euonymus alatus* and *Philadelphus* 'Belle Étoile', all floating in a sea of ▷

## In the zone

Gardens divided by formal hedges, walls or water, into what are generally called garden rooms, offer the chance to create a series of distinctive and unrelated planting styles. Zones can be a little more tricky to pull off, as the eye travels from one to the other unobstructed. "In a garden, you don't want to have completely contrasting spaces in a long line," explains Jane. "A garden wants to flow, so the zones have to speak the same language while shifting in colour and texture." To achieve this Jane suggests selecting plants that have a naturalistic feel, such as loosestrife, euphorbias and grasses. "There's nothing very hybridised in this garden," she says. Repetition is also a good way to bring cohesion to a larger space. Jane has bookended this garden with neutral areas of *Astrantia major* 'Large White' and dense *Sesleria autumnalis* grass. Once a framework is in place elements can move around. "It's about keeping areas clearly defined but also flowing together," says Jane. "Avoiding things becoming too rigid." As this garden illustrates so well, even the most contemporary of concept designs can allow nature to blur the edges.

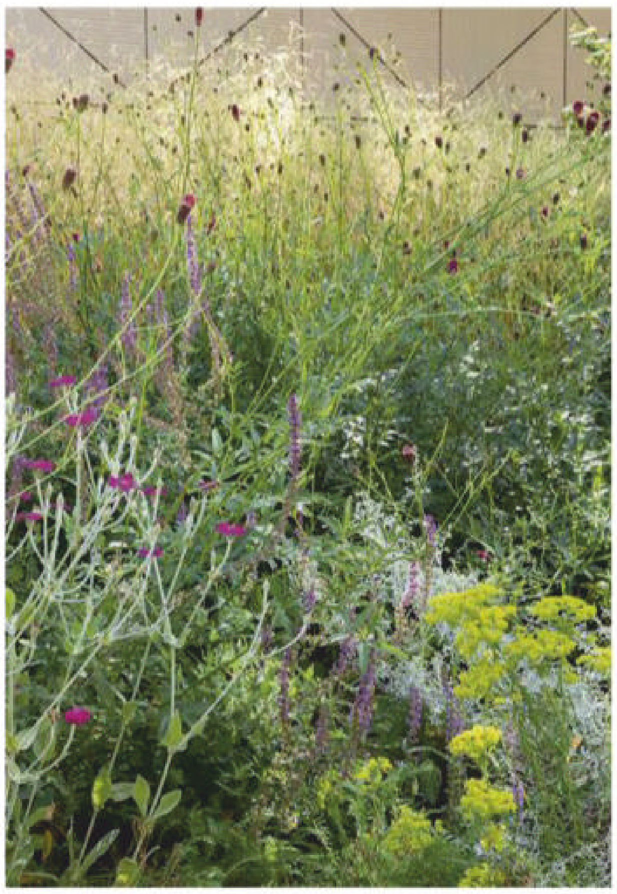
**Above**

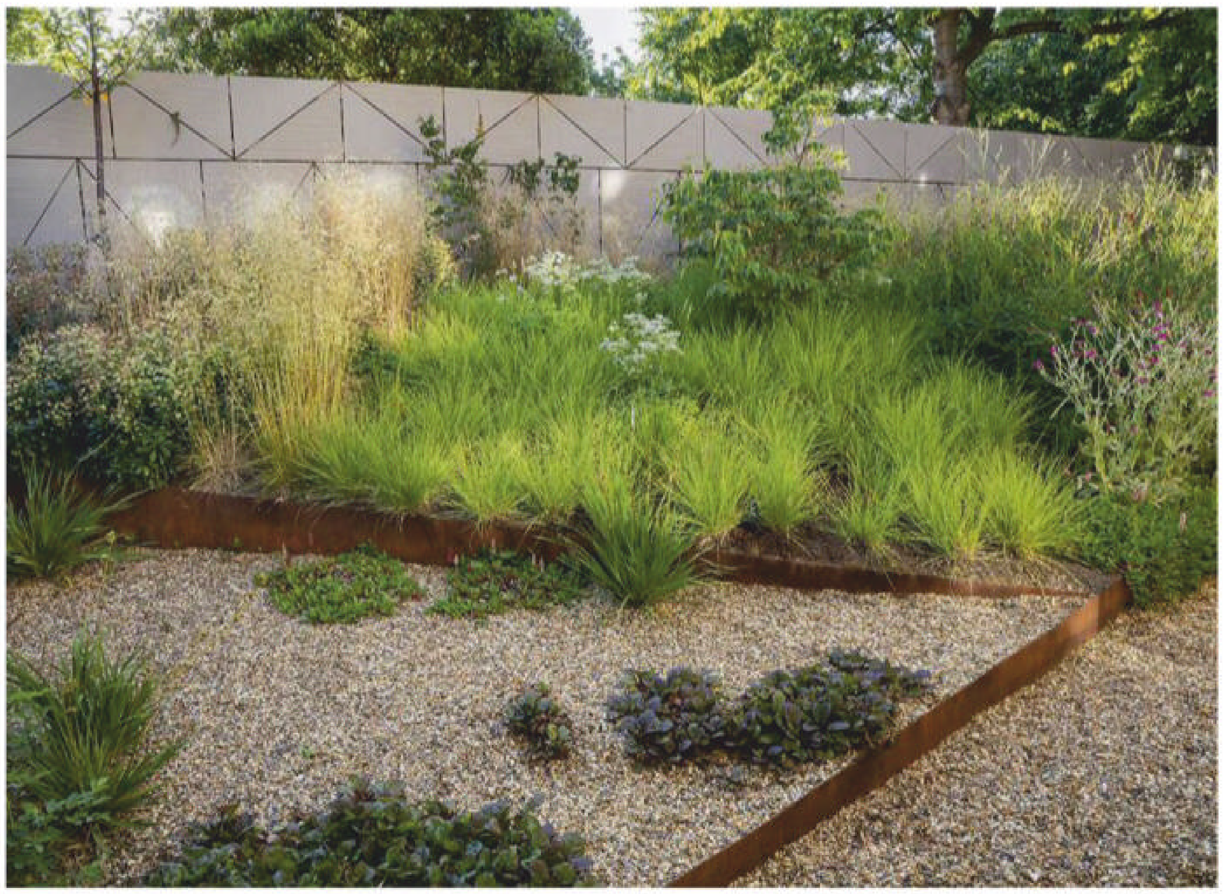
Lush and exuberant textural planting, featuring tall, herbaceous *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Red Thunder' and the silvery leaved *Lychnis coronaria*, faces the converted chapel across a gravel zone planted with robust and spreading *Persicaria affinis* 'Darjeeling Red'. Near the fence a *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'China Girl' shrub sits among the grass *Sesleria autumnalis* dotted with clumps of *Astrantia major* 'Large White'.

**Facing page**

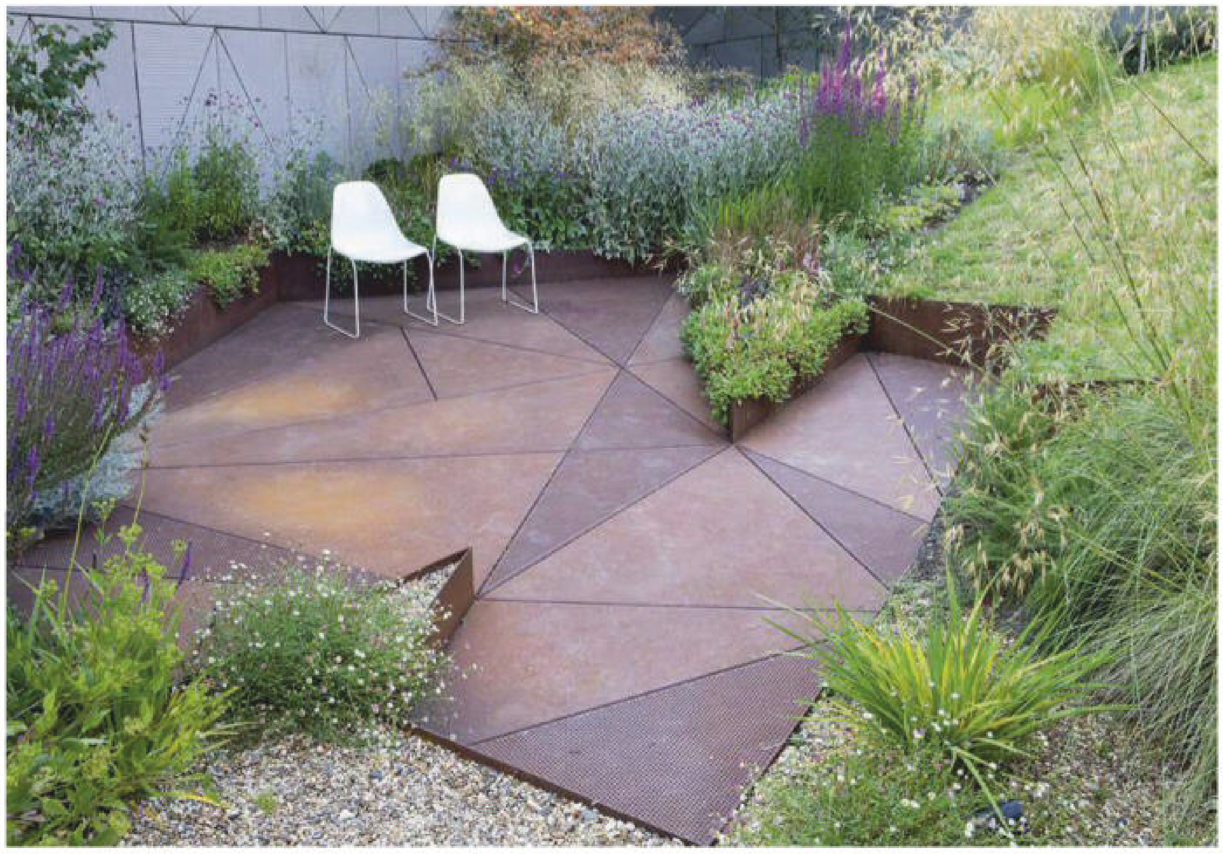
**Top** Textured cement board fence panels, in a triangular shape that echoes the Chapel's extraordinary ecclesiastical roof, are softened by frothy grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldschleier'.

**Below** Tall spikes of purple loosestrife, *Lythrum virgatum* 'Rosy Gem' are a colour link to *Lychnis coronaria*, while behind, clumps of *Astrantia major* 'Large White' float in sea of the grass *Sesleria autumnalis*.





> **Plants don't stay in neat lines, they spill over and migrate, but I like that, you want to feel joy when you walk in it**



**This page**

**Top left** Yellow *Euphorbia seguieriana* stands out against shimmering *Artemisia alba* 'Canescens' in front of *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Red Thunder' studding *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldschleier'.

**Top right** Corten steel edging defines the different zones, here separating lush planting from a gravel zone dotted with low-growing *Ajuga reptans* 'Catlin's Giant' and *Persicaria affinis* 'Darjeeling Red'.

**Right** Triangular sheets of Corten steel create a central seating zone enclosed by a great swathe of jubilant planting, from tall, pink *Lythrum virgatum* 'Rosy Gem' to low-growing *Persicaria affinis* 'Darjeeling Red', which spills over the edging, bringing an informality to the garden's structure.

**Facing page**

An informal pathway weaves through gravel planting of durable low-growing plants including *Lamium maculatum* 'Beacon Silver', *Erigeron karvinskianus* and *Libertia grandiflora*.

▷ *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldschleier' that – when summer draws to a close – put on a spectacular autumnal show.

The intention behind the zones was to offer differing perspectives from the property, from delicate planting viewed close-up through floor-length windows to tall boundary trees for privacy. "I suspect that things will become less rigid as time goes on," says Jane. "I always knew that the shapes would eventually blur – plants don't stay in neat lines, they spill-over and migrate. But I quite like that; it's a garden after all: you want to feel joy when you walk in it." Indeed the planting feels naturalistic, particularly the gravel species, which appear almost self-seeded. This informality is mirrored by the meadow opposite, one of the garden's great success stories. "We sowed it with an Emorsgate Flowering Lawn seed mix as we wanted a low, rather than typical meadow, height." In spring, crocus and narcissus bulbs add early seasonal colour, before the wildflowers from the seed mix, such as *Prunella vulgaris* (selfheal) and *Lotus corniculatus* (bird's foot trefoil), begin to flower in early summer. "These seed mixes are a practical thing people can do with their lawns," adds Jane. "They're so much better for insects, and they're also less work."

Considering the garden was only created three years ago, it is astonishing how well the planting is taking possession of its hard-edged boundaries. "I've been surprised too, by how much has coped with this clay soil," says Jane. Yet there is still room for manoeuvre. "Now we've got a handle on what grows well here we can experiment and make changes," says Jane. "That's the real fun of gardens." □

# Urban sanctuary

*In this city garden, designer Alasdair Cameron has made the most of wildly differing levels to create a dynamic yet tranquil space – a refuge from London's busy streets*

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW**
PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

## KEY ELEMENTS

**What** Small city garden.
**Where** Central London.
**Soil** New topsoil mixed with recycled soil from excavation.
**Size** 14m x 7m.
**Aspect** North facing.
**Special features** Level changes following a basement extension.
**Designed by** Cameron Landscapes & Gardens (camerongardens.co.uk).

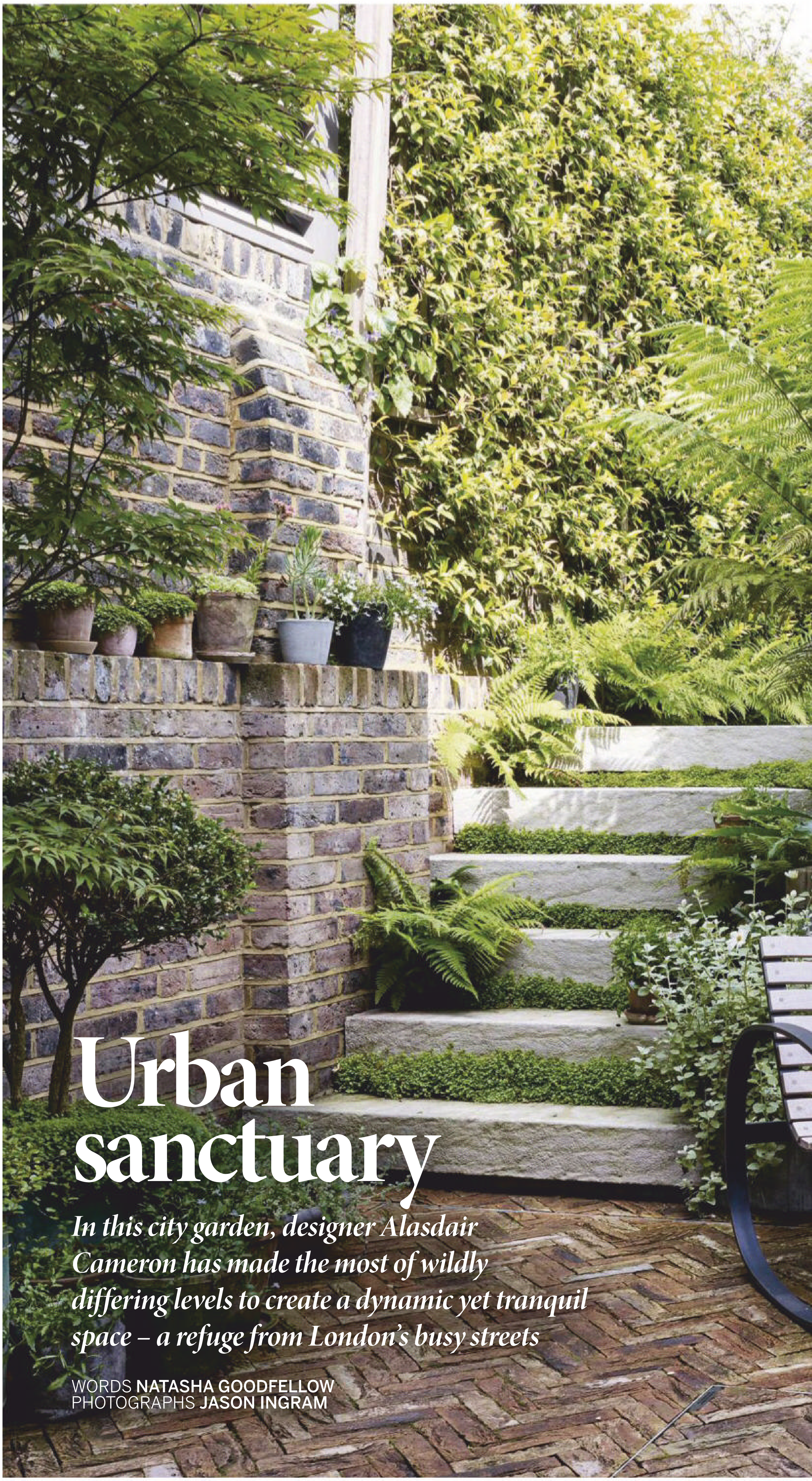
Most garden designers talk about getting to know a site before they set to work, but few can hope to know a space as well as Alasdair Cameron did when tackling this project just off High Street Kensington in London.

Alasdair originally designed the garden in 1998 and has maintained it ever since, even when the house was sold and new owners moved in. When, 13 years later, they decided on a major refurbishment, lowering the basement to enlarge the kitchen, it was clear the garden would need remodelling too, and Alasdair was the obvious choice.

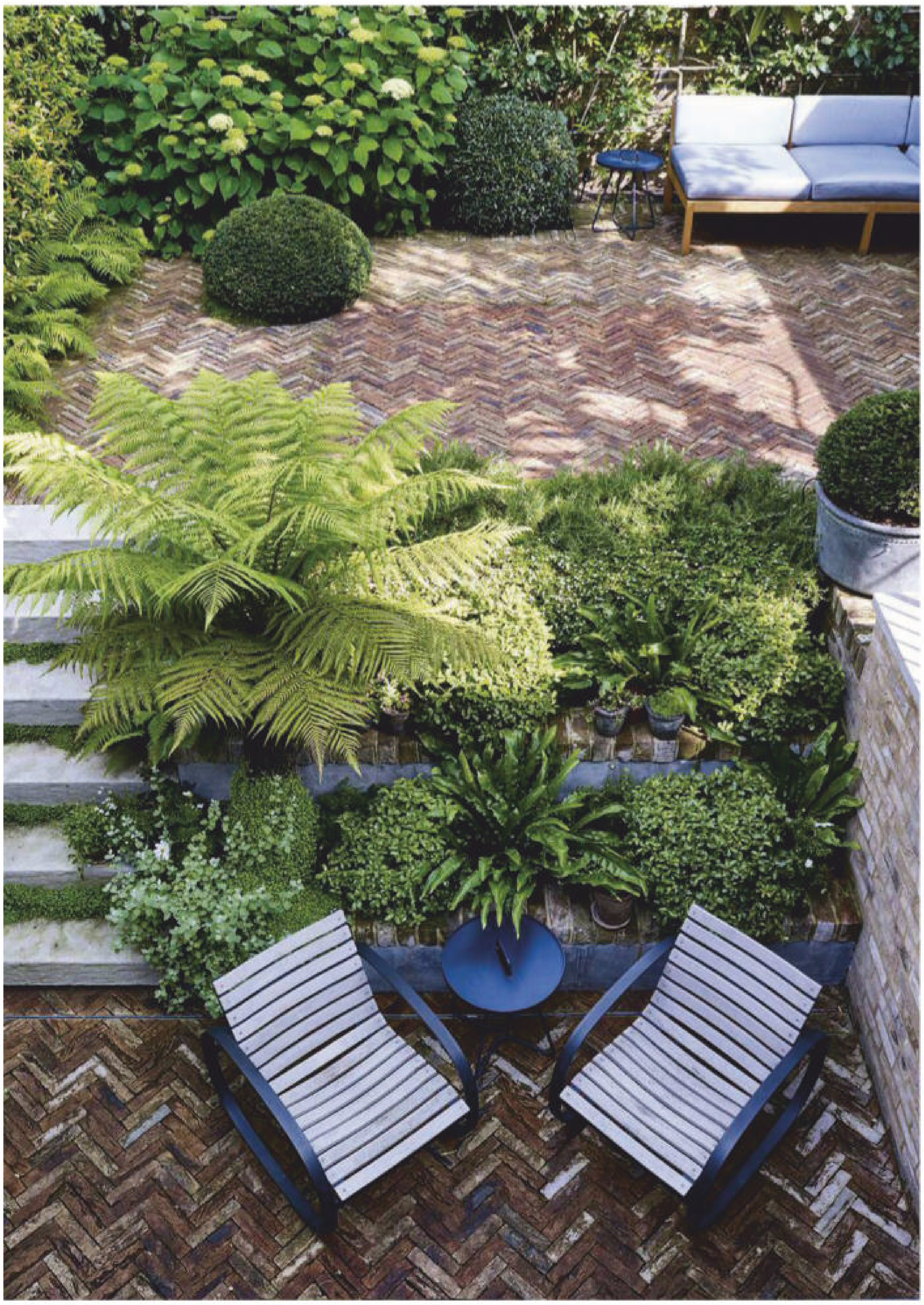
"So often garden design is bolted on at the end of a house renovation," says Alasdair, "but the amazing thing about this project was that I was involved pre planning permission. The clients co-ordinated everything brilliantly so that we could work closely with the architects and ensure that we had everything in place to make the garden a success."

As with most city basement extensions, the challenges were chiefly around linking the wildly different levels of the garden; ensuring there was enough light to the lower storey and, since the new walls are made of glass, in forging a connection between outside and in. "The garden makes a huge contribution to the wellbeing of the clients and their family and they wanted something relaxed and calming," says Alasdair, "a sanctuary that would look good throughout the year."

Steps were clearly going to be needed from the small terrace outside the kitchen to the main garden level and, to prevent the ascent being too high, Alasdair decided to lower the latter by about 600mm; a huge undertaking. But there was a problem – ▷



A series of stepped raised beds – filled with a lush mix of planting that includes *Asplenium scolopendrium*, *Rosmarinus officinalis* Prostratus Group and is dominated by a striking *Dicksonia antarctica* tree fern, create an enclosed and intimate seating area outside the new kitchen extension.



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**Above** Grey louvred panels on the wall create privacy while allowing light into the basement kitchen. Pots in the side return are used to add seasonal interest.

**Right** Different levels help create distinctive areas that are linked by the repeat planting of striking plants.

**Below left** Limestone steps leading to the lower level are softened by ribbons of *Soleirolia soleirolii*.

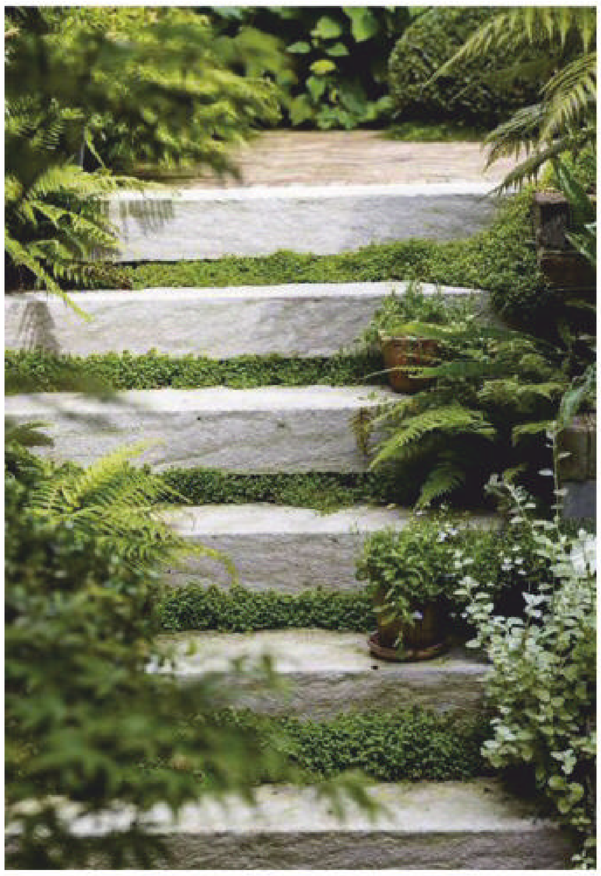
**Below right** Clay bricks laid in a herringbone pattern are fringed by fresh-green *Dryopteris filix-mas*.

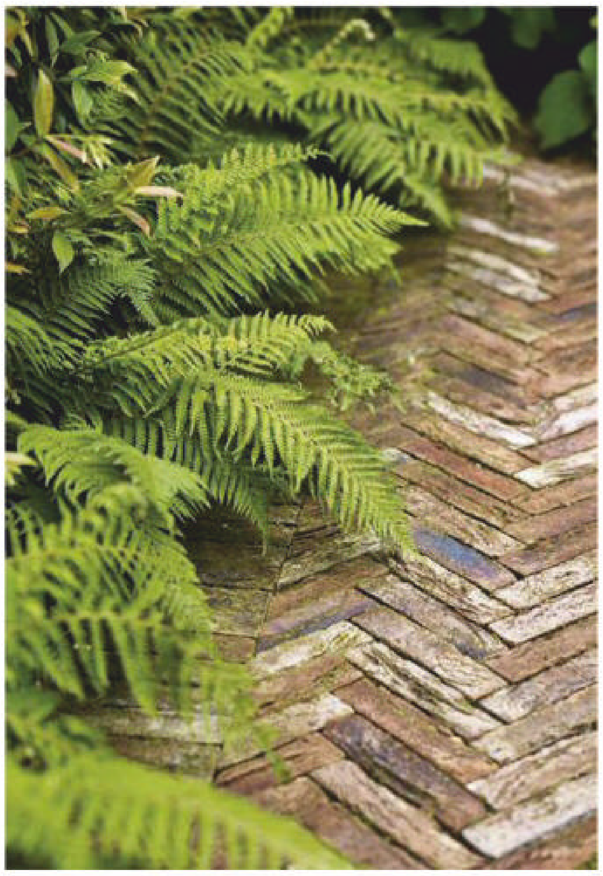
**Facing page**

The planting uses a predominately green palette, playing with different foliage shapes and textures. Alastair also adds annuals, such as ammi and orlaya, to add colour. A grey pigment used on walls and planters helps to brighten the green and tie the planting in with the furniture and the kitchen's decor.

▷ an established *Magnolia grandiflora,* which neither Alasdair nor the client was prepared to lose. Working closely with an arborist and the architect, they were able to preserve the roots and incorporate it into the design. Further collaboration brought other benefits too. Having been able to specify the correct drainage at the planning stage, Alasdair was able to build in raised beds planted up with a shade-loving mix of *Asplenium scolopendrium*, *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Golf Ball' and a tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), thereby considerably reducing the impact of the retaining wall.

Throughout the space, Alasdair has ensured cohesion by using a limited palette of materials. Clay bricks laid in a herringbone pattern echo the wooden floor within, while the limestone of the steps matches that into which the glass doors are set. "In such a small space, I like to keep things simple, otherwise it gets too busy and makes the space look





The clients wanted a sanctuary that would look good throughout the year

## Working with a green colour palette

Top tips from designer Alasdair Cameron

**Thinking of foliage plants as just 'green' belies the many different shades there are to play with.** For example, mind-your-own-business (*Soleirolia soleirolii)* is a bright, almost electric green; *Stauntonia hexaphylla*, a favourite climber of mine, is an appley green, while muehlenbeckia has a more brownish hue.

**When you're using just one colour, foliage texture and proportion take on a far greater importance.** I think spheres of *Taxus baccata*, *Hebe rakaiensis* and *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Golf Ball' look great together – the leaf sizes are similar but they provide both different shades and textures.

**Use evergreens for winter interest and structure,** but make sure you have some summer flowers nearby. Evergreens can feel a bit dark in summer.

**Ferns are great plants for a green garden** – they have so many different textures and shapes – and they are especially good when they unfurl. I love the glossy, crinkled leaves of the hart's tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium* and the shuttlecock clumps of the male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*.

**Think about the different planes in your garden** and how to dress them. I use *Trachelospermum jasminoides* like a curtain of foliage, and I love the way prostrate rosemary sprawls across the tops of walls or planters.

smaller," says Alasdair. He's applied this logic to the planting, too, using a mainly green, white and pale-pink palette, with evergreen yew domes, tree ferns and 'curtains' of scented *Trachelospermum jasminoides* and *Stauntonia hexaphylla* for year-round interest. Seasonal lifts come courtesy of *Rosa* 'Cécile Brünner', long-flowering *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle', the spring blossom on a pleached panel of *Malus domestica* 'James Grieve' at the rear of the garden, and in the *Parthenocissus henryana*, which turns a glorious red in autumn.

Although the planting spaces are relatively small, the effect is full and tranquil and, most importantly, the space works incredibly well. With three different seating areas for different moods and occasions and an outdoor shower tucked in next to the magnolia, this is very much an outside room – and one that more than lives up to the brief of providing a sanctuary from the busy city beyond. ❑

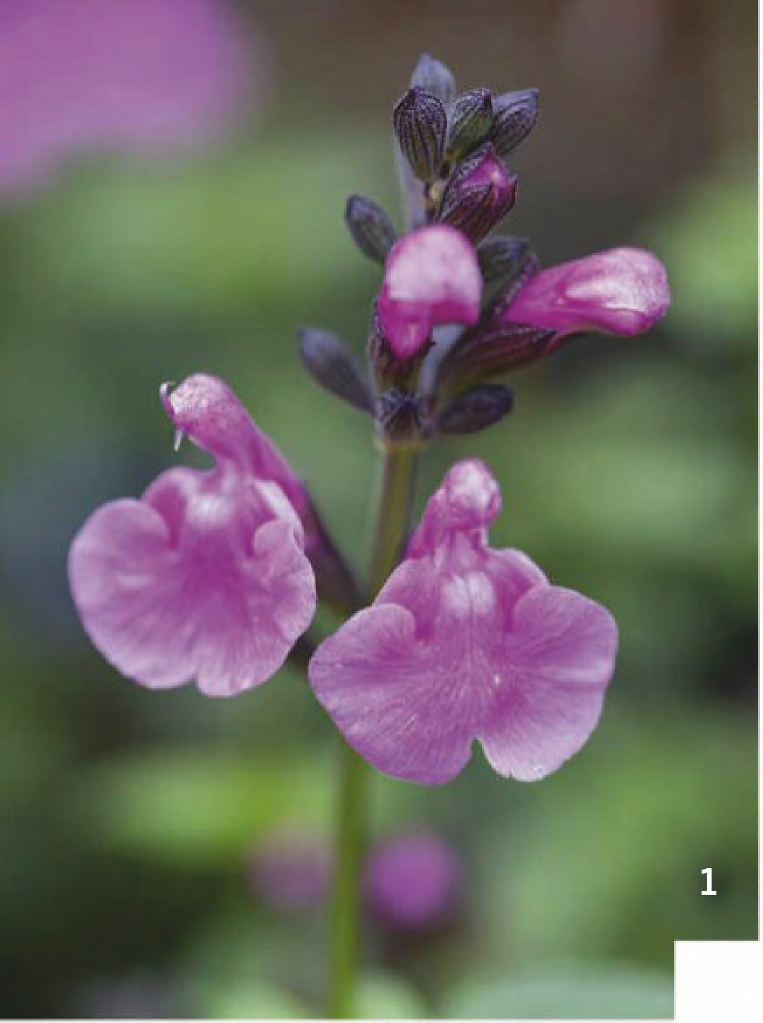
# Quiet revolution

From his nursery based in the grounds of Great Comp Garden in Kent, William Dyson has quietly been changing the way we look at salvias

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

**Facing page** Surrounding a Georgian manor house, the gardens at Great Comp were developed in the 1950s by Roderick and Joy Cameron. Now owned by a Charitable Trust, Great Comp has been the home for the past 25 years of William Dyson's specialist salvia nursery.

**This image** The well-drained soil of the gardens and sunny, open site is perfect for salvia growing. Here *Salvia* 'Phyllis' Fancy' is a vigorous and floriferous plant but in most parts of the UK it needs to be overwintered in a greenhouse.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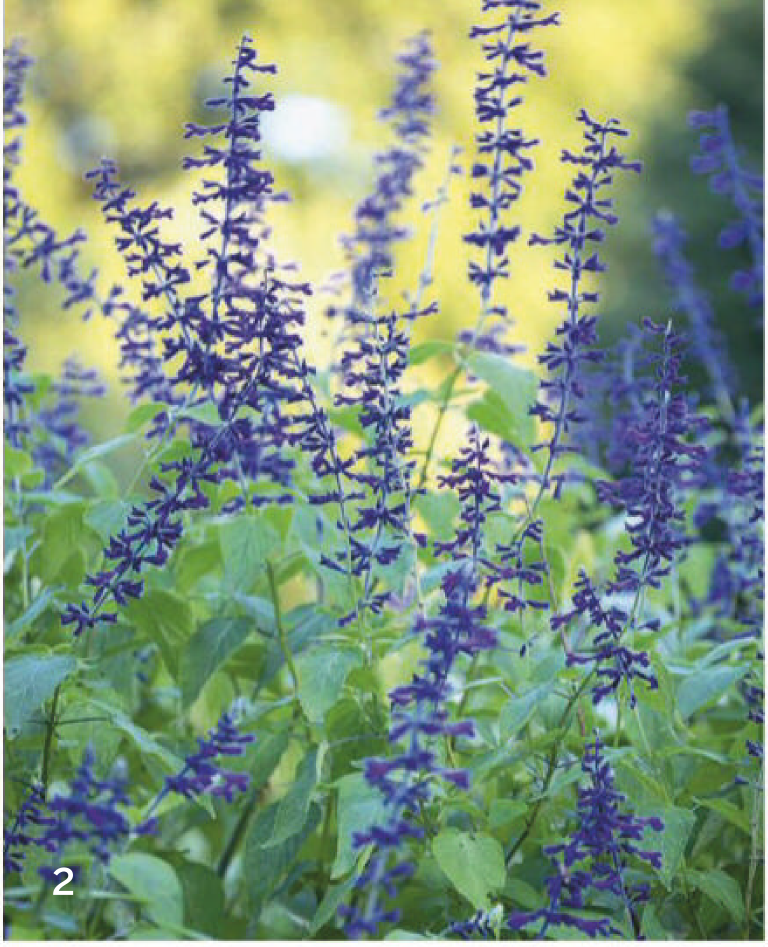
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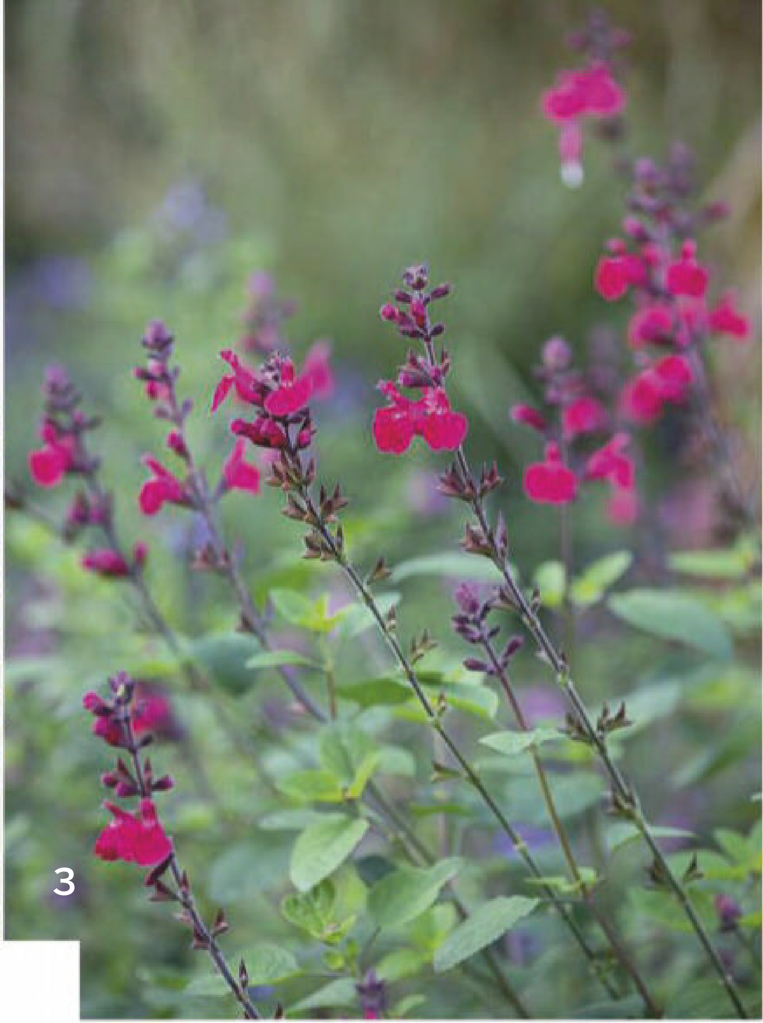
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# 16 KEY SALVIAS

**1 *Salvia* 'Flower Child'** One of the smallest forms of *S. microphylla*. The candy-floss pink flowers appear from July to October. 40cm. RHS H5[†].

**2 *Salvia concolor*** A massive plant with deep royal-blue flowers on flower spikes that can be 50cm long. 2.5m. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

**3 *Salvia* 'Ping Pong'** A new introduction from William that he selected for its densely packed flower spikes and long flowering period. The flowers are deep pink and appear from early June to October. 1m. RHS H5.

**4 *Salvia* 'Phyllis' Fancy'** Its white flowers, the texture of velvet, become suffused with purple as they age and are held in dark-violet calyces. It was discovered in UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden. 2m. RHS H3.

**5 *Salvia* 'Amistad'** A spectacular tender perennial with aromatic foliage and masses of royal-purple flowers that have almost-black calyces. It starts flowering at the end of June and will continue up until October. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

**6 *Salvia corrugata* 'Bright Lights'** A fast-growing shrub with aromatic foliage and whorls of violet-blue flowers at the end of the summer. Unlike most salvias, it prefers moist soil. Best grown in a pot and overwintered inside. 90cm. RHS H3.

**7 *Salvia* 'Nachtvlinder'** A shrubby, suckering plant found at the De Hessenhof nursery in the Netherlands. A floriferous plant, the flowers are a dark maroon-purple with a smoky sheen. 75cm. AGM. RHS H5.

**8 *Salvia* 'Amante'** Recently developed in Argentina, the silky purple-red flowers and dark calyces were a breakthrough in *S. guaranitica* hybrids, which are usually a shade of blue. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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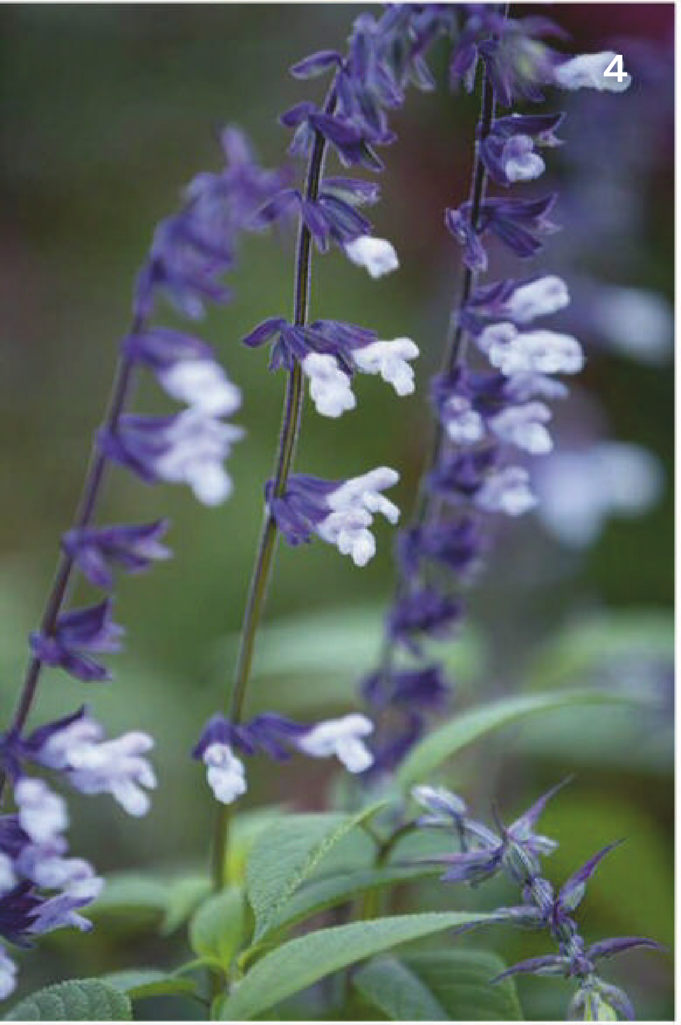
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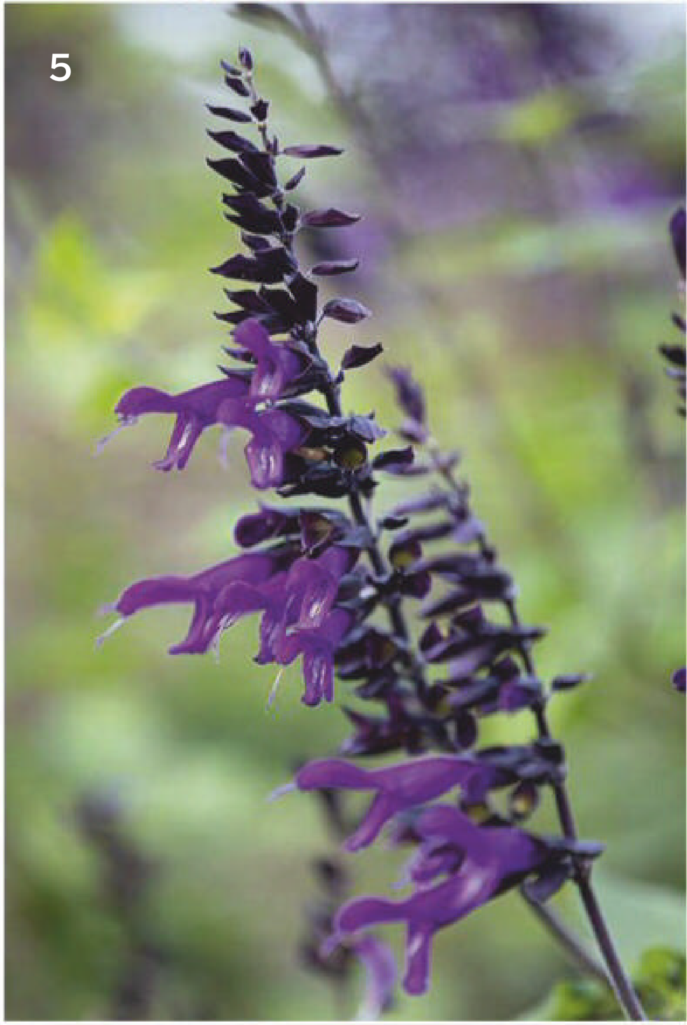
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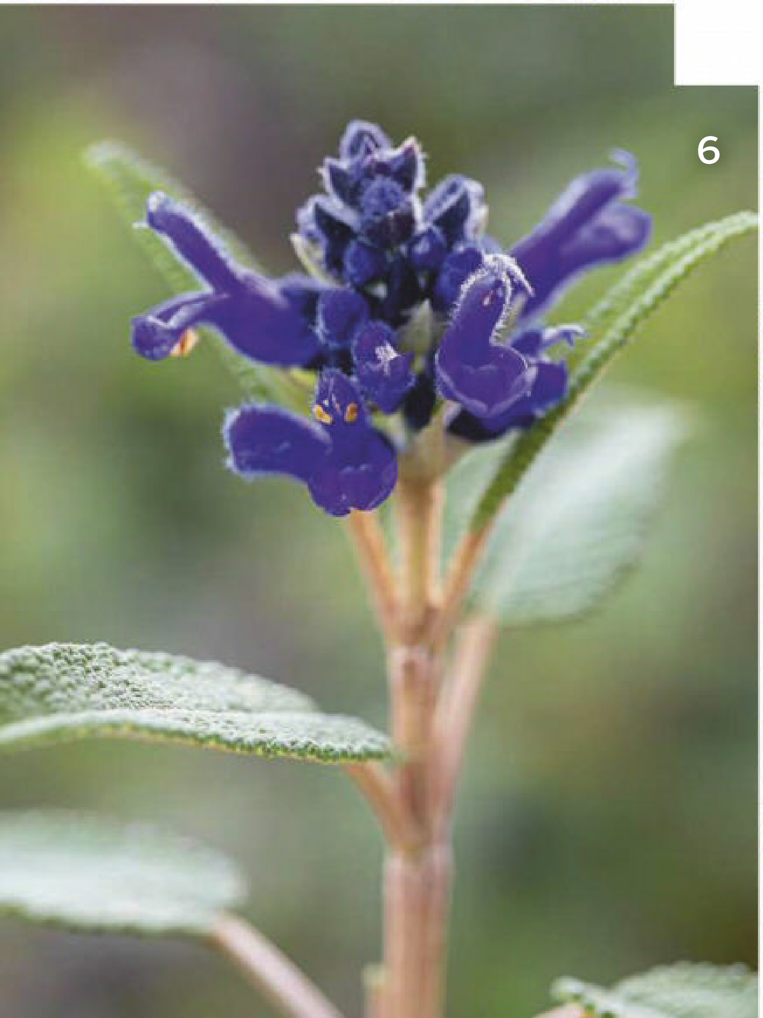
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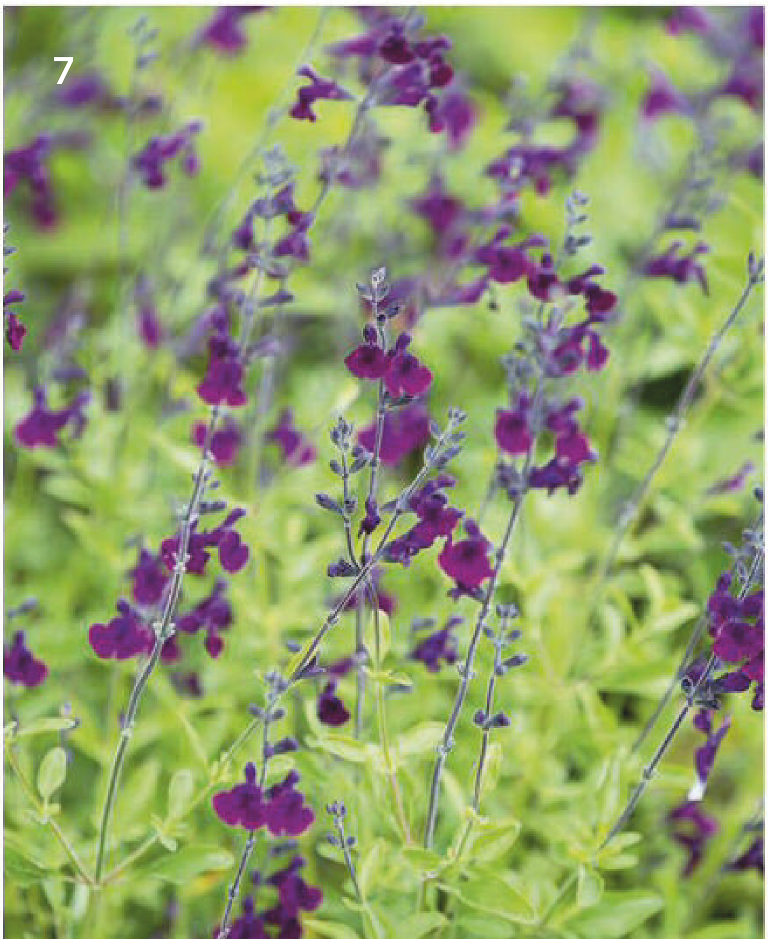
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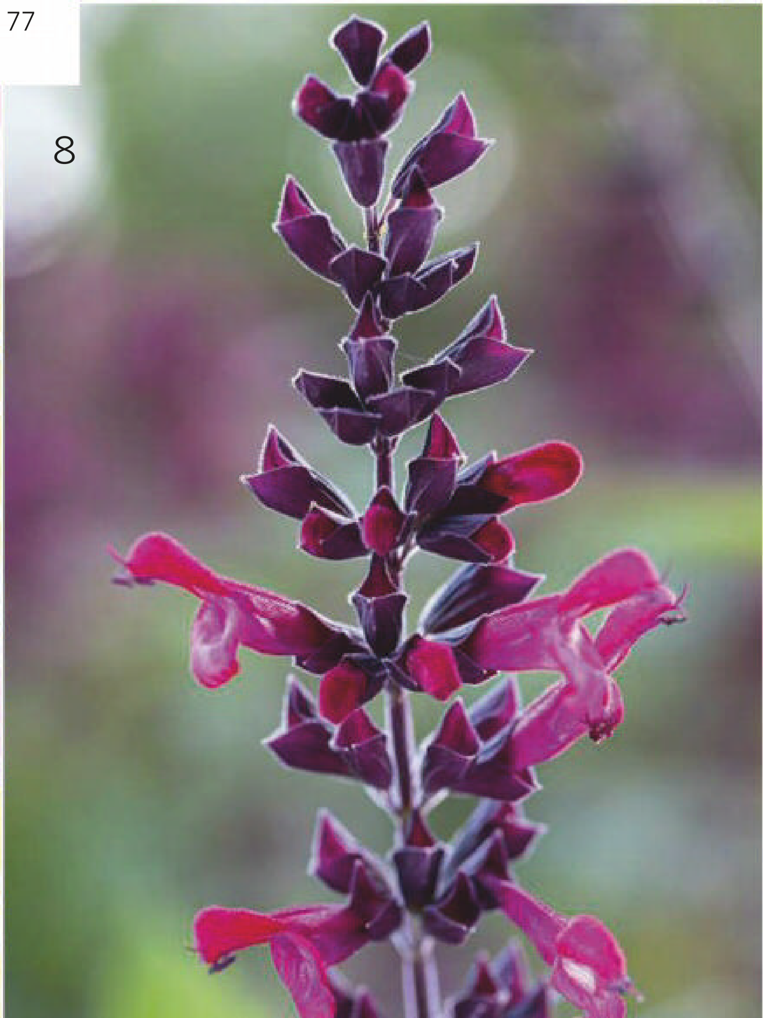
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It is rare for a plant nursery to revolutionise the way we see a particular group of plants but William Dyson's nursery, sitting in the beautifully romantic gardens of Great Comp near Sevenoaks in Kent, has done just that. Twenty-five years ago, when William took on the job of head gardener and nursery manager at Great Comp, salvias were either a bright-red bedding plant or a culinary herb. Now, thanks in great part to William's knowledge, energy and enthusiasm the genus is widely grown and admired.

William took over ownership of Great Comp's plant nursery in 1995, selling mainly a mix of herbaceous plants that were growing in the garden. Magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons are the backbone of the garden and at the time William wanted to bring more colour into the planting schemes during the summer months. Around the same time, plant collectors James Compton, John d'Arcy and Martyn Rix had returned from Mexico with a hybrid sage, *Salvia* x *jamensis*.

"This was a pivotal point," says William. "I managed to get hold of a few plants and here, where the soil is free draining and we get plenty of sunshine, they were fantastic – masses of colour for months on end. I then went about getting whatever salvias I could get my hands on."

Seedling salvias began popping up in the garden and William decided to start a controlled breeding programme. In 1997 he launched *Salvia* 'Silas Dyson', a hardy, floriferous shrubby salvia with rich-crimson flowers that blooms from May to November. The plant was instantly popular and was followed by *Salvia* 'Dyson's Crimson', an open-pollinated seedling taken from 'Silas Dyson', which has a darker flower and a compact habit.

Many more introductions of hardy shrubby salvias followed and were met with enthusiasm by gardeners who were seduced by their easy cultivation and extraordinarily long flowering period. Around three-quarters of the plants produced on the nursery are now salvias.

"At the time it was so exciting because nobody knew much about salvias except the bedding ones," remembers William. The nursery was the first at an RHS show with a single-genus display of *Salvia*. Other plant breeders and nurseries in ▷

The nursery is situated inside Great Comp garden where plants are well ordered and neatly presented. Although the vast majority of plants on sale are the salvias that can be seen growing in the garden, William also produces many other herbaceous perennials, particularly hardy geraniums and grasses.

▷ Europe and in North America began introducing new cultivars and hybrids. A major turning point for salvias came in 2004 with the distribution of a plant originally found growing in a pot on a Mexican patio. *Salvia* 'Hot Lips' is a flamboyant shrubby form, which is bicoloured during the summer but can have either single red or single white flowers in the cooler months. It has become extremely popular and encouraged gardeners to look at others salvias.

As well as the shrubby forms of the family, the nursery also produces hardy perennial salvias and tender forms. William's favourites change with the seasons. During the winter, many of the tender species are flowering in his greenhouse and lift the spirits on grey days. *Salvia gesneriflora* 'Monty' is usually a greenhouse plant but there is one outside against a south-facing wall, where its flame-coloured flowers bask against the warmth of the wall. "Seeing it flowering in February makes me happy," says William.

During the summer his "absolute favourite" is the impressive *Salvia atrocyanea*, whose arching stems reach 2.5m and seem to be weighed down by its fat spikes of blue flowers. William grows the plants near clumps of the tall grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light', and this year he is trying it with the airy, pink-and-white flowers of *Nicotiana mutabilis*. "I think it will look spectacular," he says.

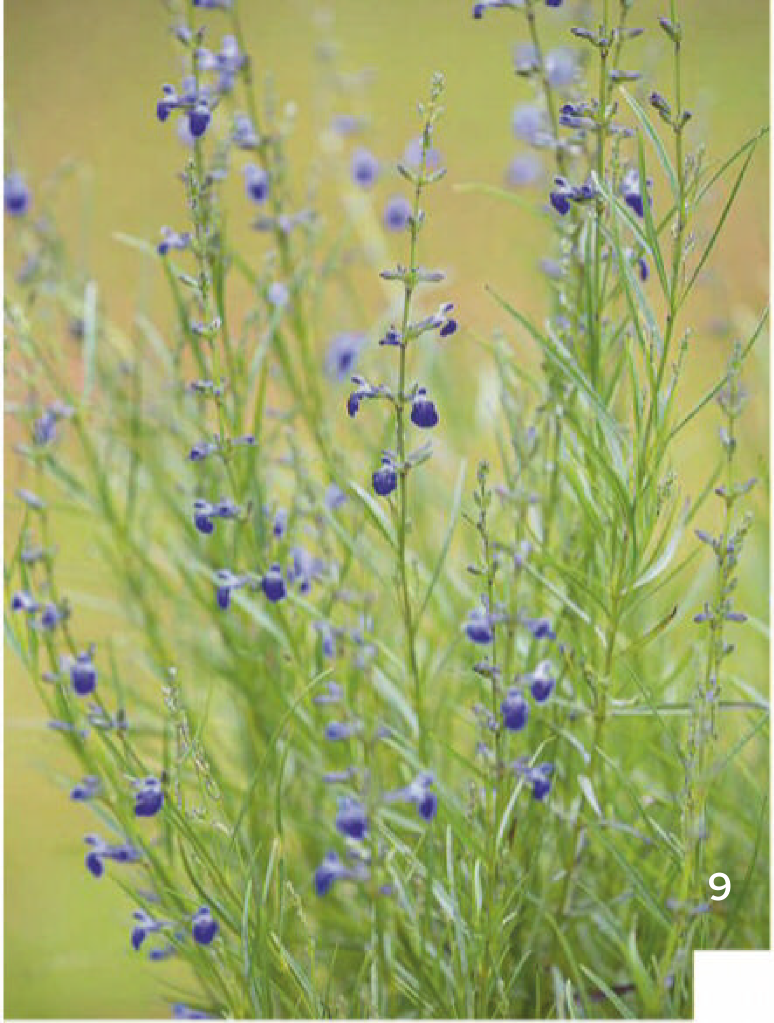
The nursery is now focusing on extending its collection and developing it to become an educational resource. William continues to breed and select new forms. "I do ask myself if we really need more salvias with so many coming from all quarters but we are still getting things that are different. I enjoy growing them for themselves and if something new comes along then fantastic. I am still as excited by salvias as I was 25 years ago." ◻

**USEFUL INFORMATION**

**Address** Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane, Platt, Near Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS. **Tel** 07887 997663. **Web** dysonsalvias.com

**Open** Daily, 1 April to 31 October, 11am-5pm. Also offers mail order.

William has planted salvias throughout the gardens, enabling visitors to see how plants in the nursery perform in the garden. He is keen to show how salvias associate well with other plants, as shown here with *Miscanthus* cultivars and both shrubby salvias and, in the background, the tall *Salvia concolor*.



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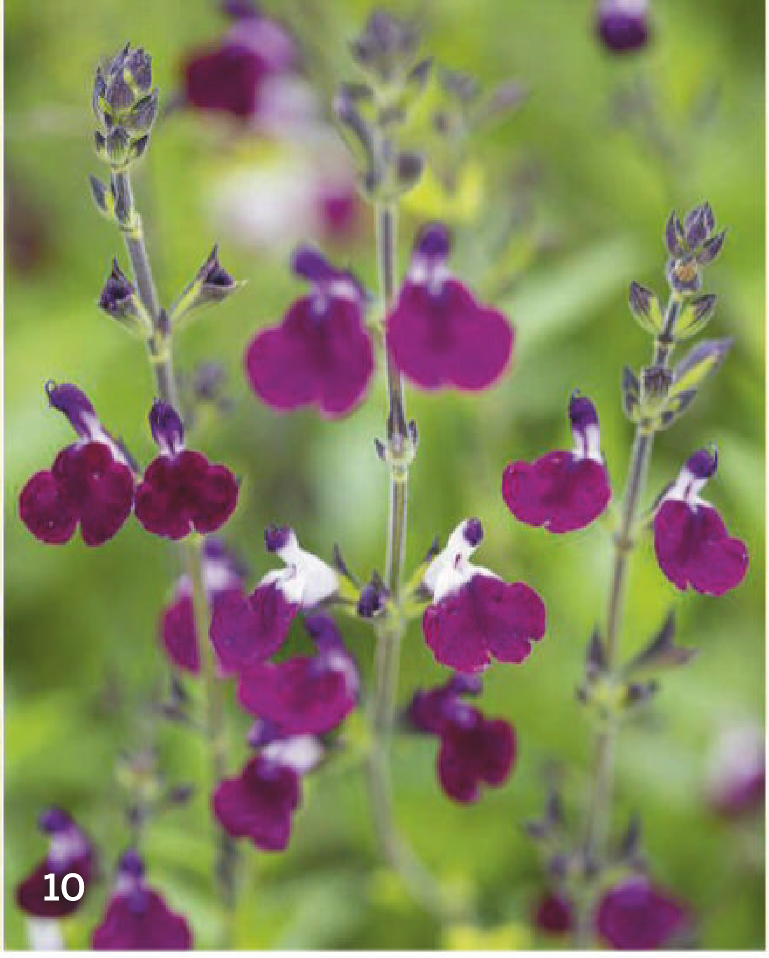

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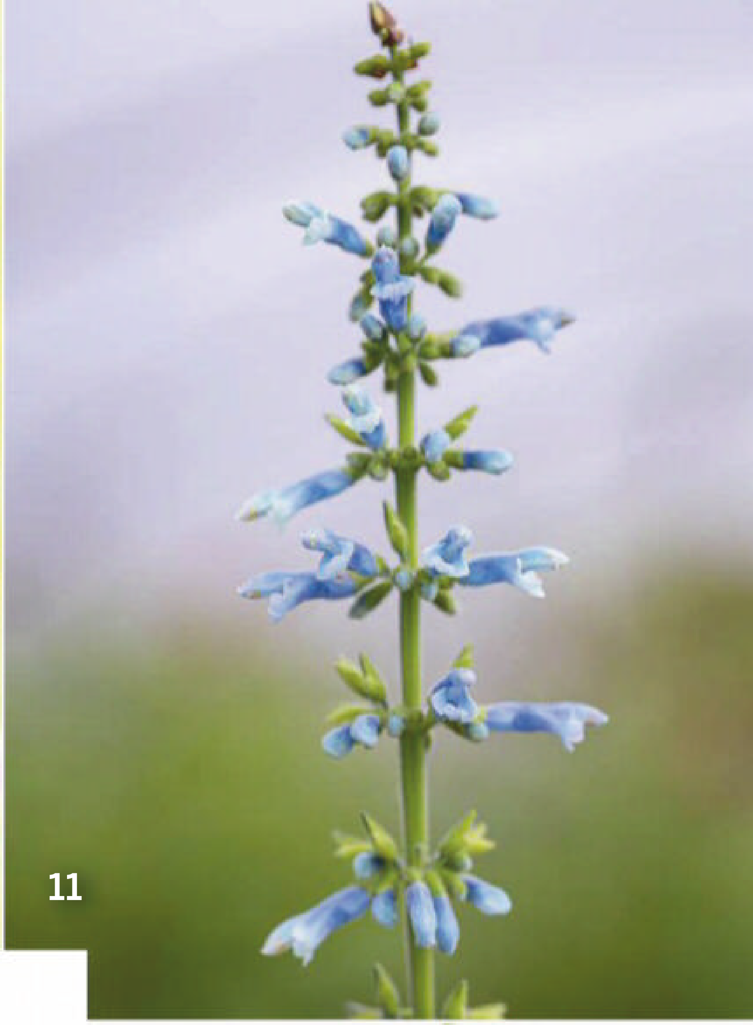

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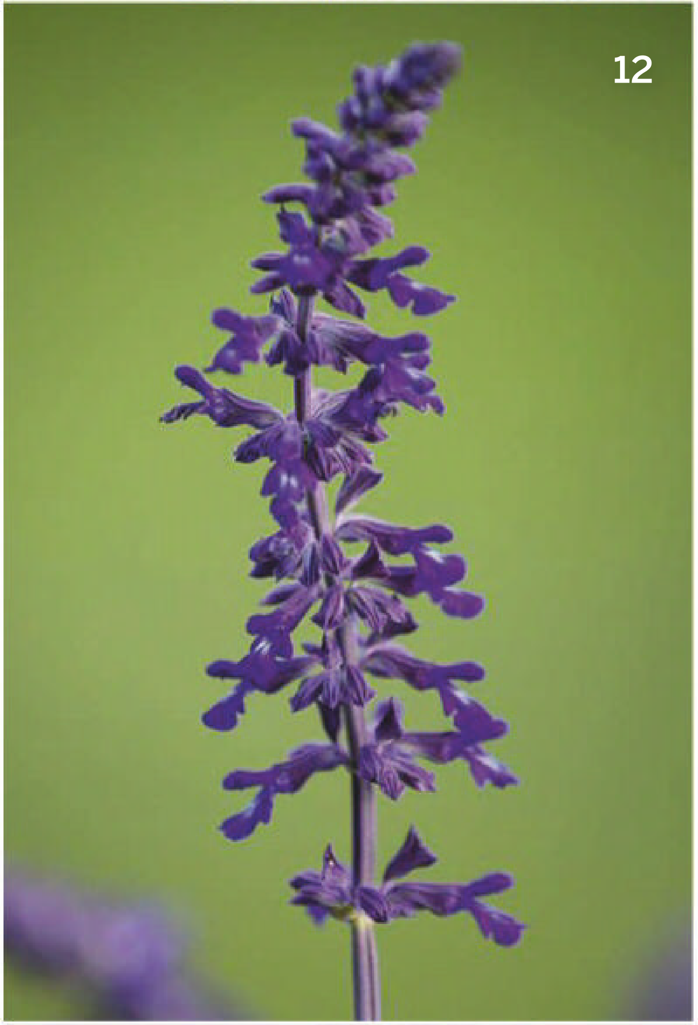

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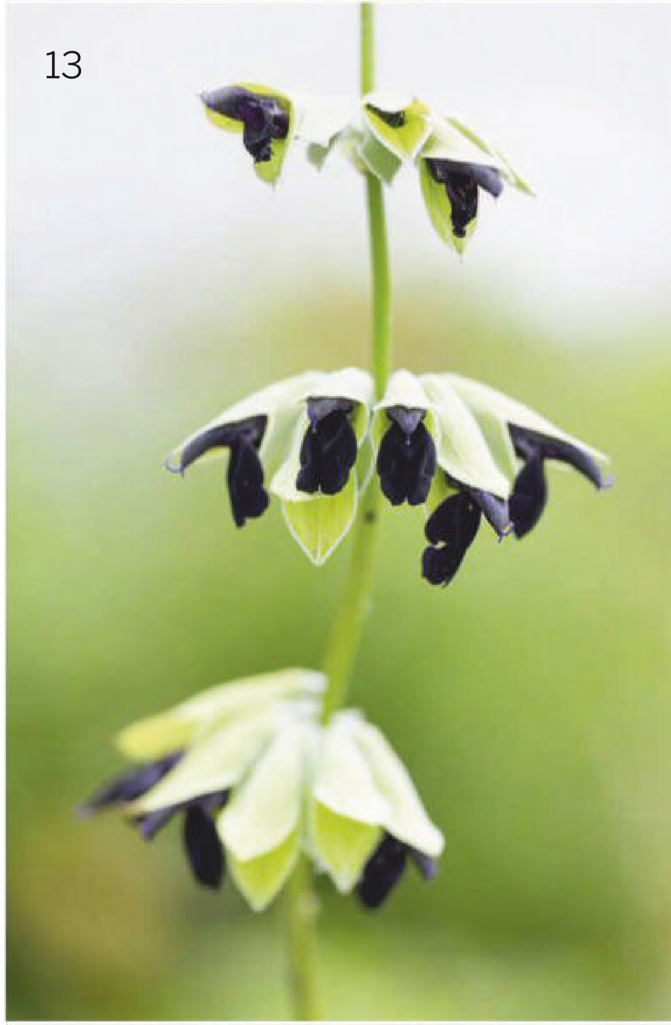

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# 16 KEY SALVIAS (continued)

**9 *Salvia reptans* 'Texan Blue'** A midsummer-flowering herbaceous perennial that it is distinctly upright unlike the decumbent species. The flowers are a deep blue, as opposed to the pale blue of the species, with long, narrow leaves. 1m. RHS H4.

**10 *Salvia* Amethyst Lips (='Dyspurp')** The bicoloured flowers are sometimes completely purple, other times entirely white, creating a striking effect reminiscent of *S.* 'Hot Lips'. Raised by amateur plant breeder David Dyson. 1m. RHS H4.

**11 *Salvia bullulata* 'Blue Jade'** A pale-blue almost turquoise form of a rare and variable species from Peru. William has likened its colour to the jade vine *Strongylodon macrobotrys* and suggests growing it in partial shade. 60cm. RHS H2.

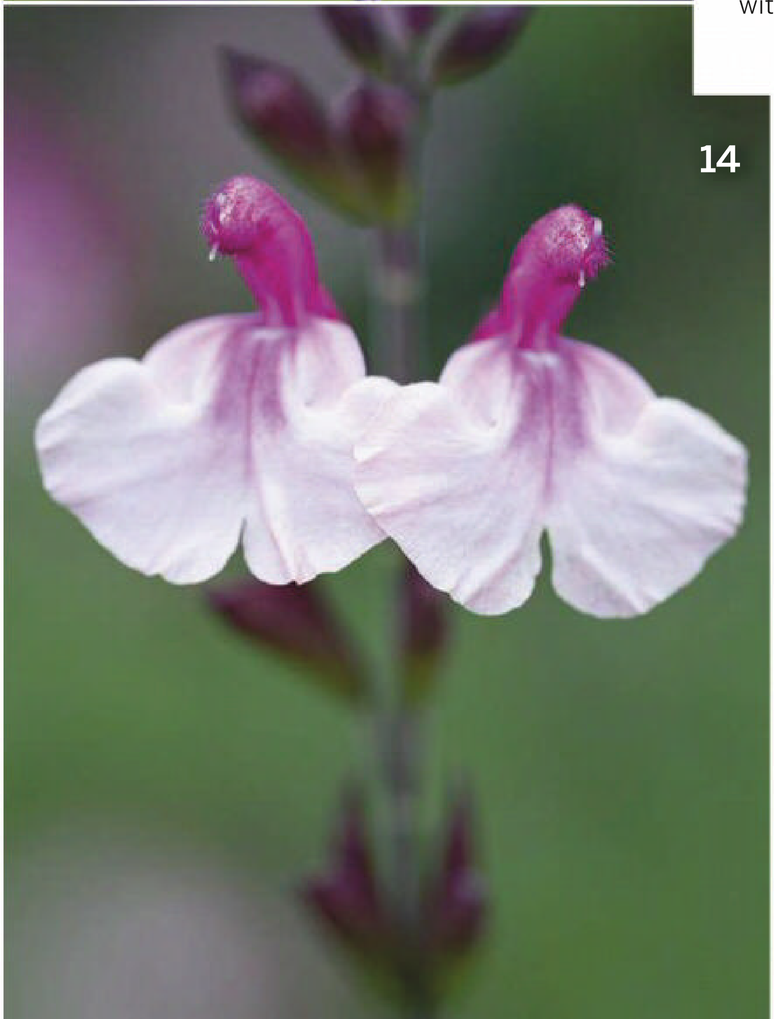
**12 *Salvia* 'Indigo Spires'** A popular hybrid with long spikes of dark-blue flowers and grey-green foliage. Often needs to be staked to prevent flopping over. Flowers all summer but at its best in autumn. 1.2m. RHS H3.

**13 *Salvia discolor*** A straggly plant with aromatic silvery foliage, slightly stick-like stems and almost-black flowers. A tender perennial that needs mollycoddling over winter. The crushed foliage smells of blackcurrant. 50cm. RHS H2.

**14 *Salvia* 'Crazy Dolls'** A compact, shrubby salvia bred in Belgium with a two-tone flower. The bottom lip is pale pink and the upper part of the flower magenta. 60cm. RHS H4.

**15 *Salvia oxyphora*** A perennial species from Bolivia with striking velvety flowers that have a sweet scent. It will grow in sun or part shade but keep it out of windy places as the stems are brittle. 1m. RHS H3.

**16 *Salvia* 'Jeremy'** Shrubby salvia similar to the popular *S.* 'Hot Lips' with flowers that are bicoloured in the height of summer and are either all pink or all white early and late in the season. 90cm. RHS H5.



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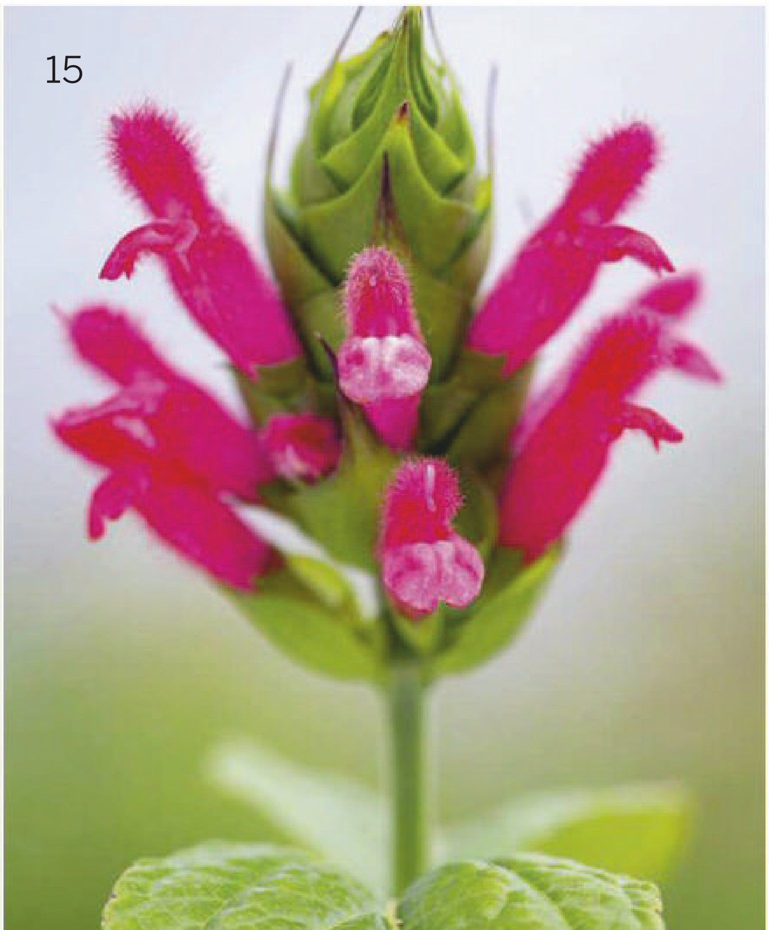

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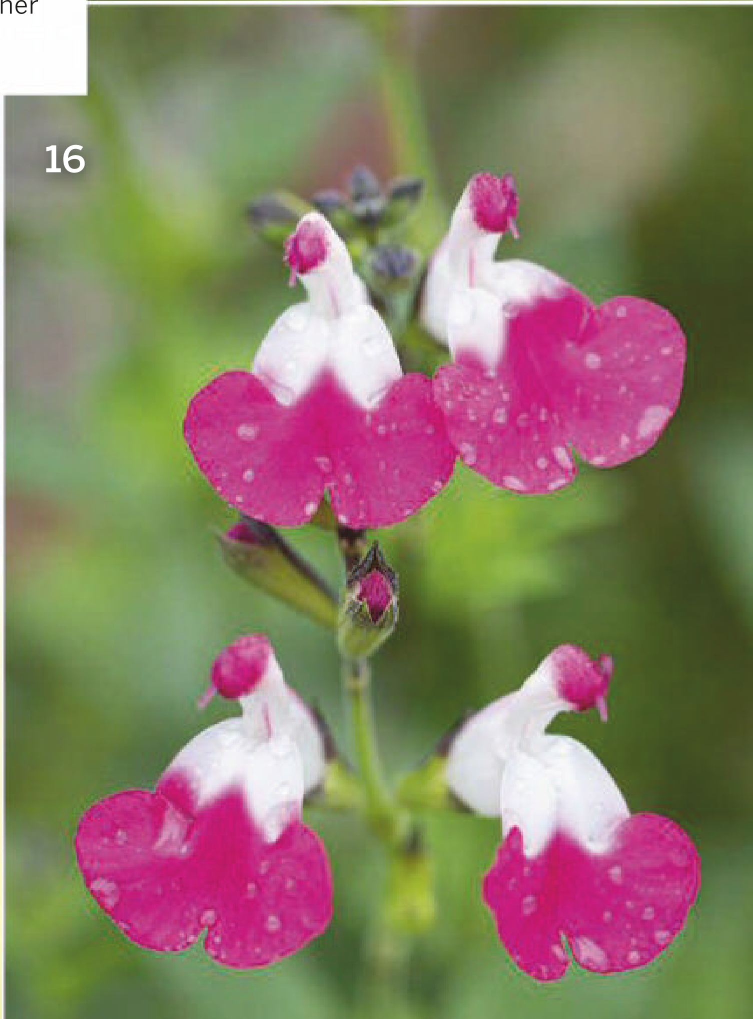


16

# Set in stone

On an island off the coast of Maine, Caleb Davis has worked with nature to create a low-input garden

WORDS KENDRA WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

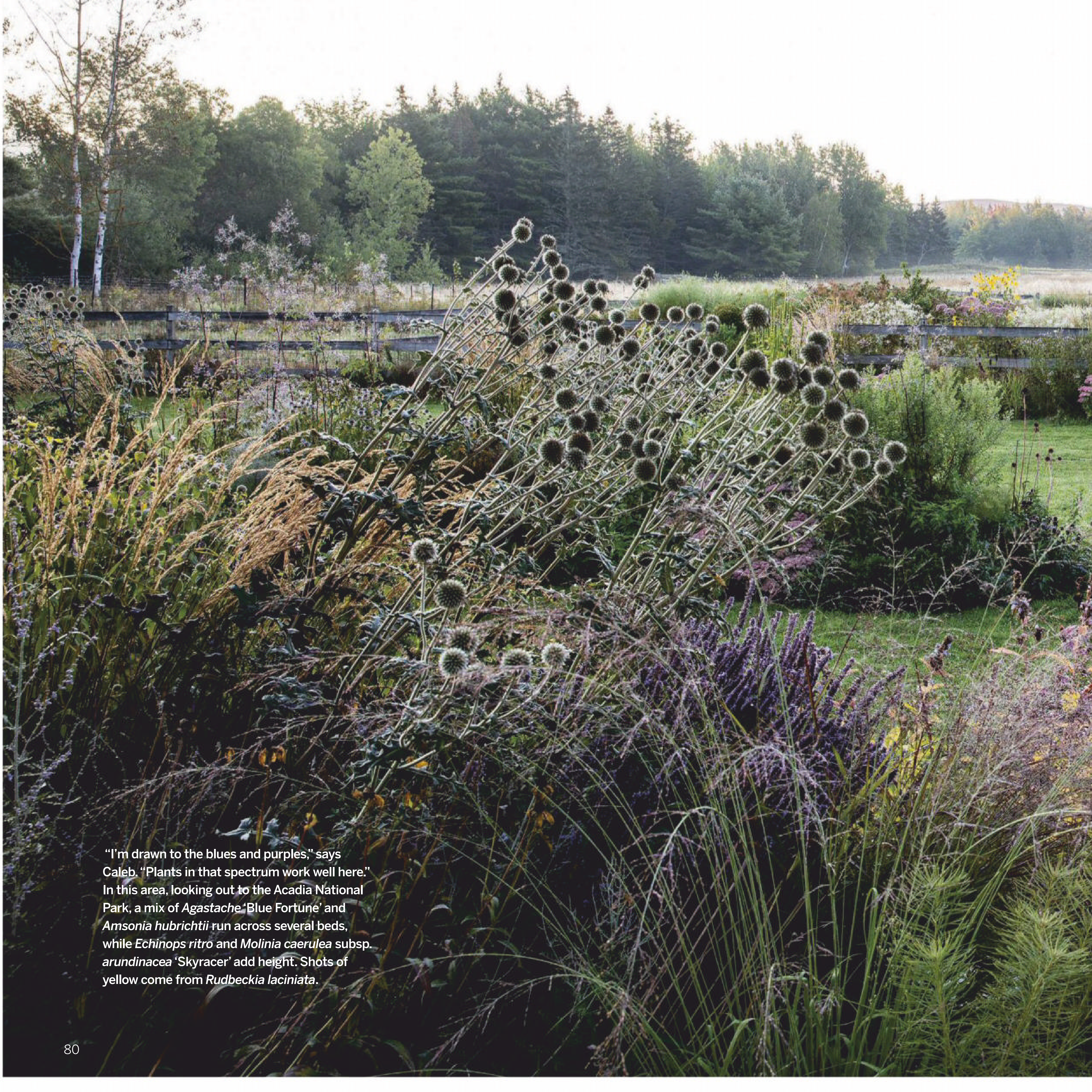
## IN BRIEF

**What** Farmhouse garden, close to the Atlantic Ocean and backing on to Acadia National Park.
**Where** Bar Harbor, Maine.
**Size** Half an acre,
**Soil** Heavy clay with free-draining loam added to some beds.
**Climate** Coastal, with very hot and dry summers. Other seasons are wet, with long periods of deep frost and heavy snow in winter.
**Hardiness zone** USDA 5b.

In this coastal garden, landscape designer Caleb Davis has broken up a large lawn with a series of perennial beds, using a planting palette that ties in with the colour of the house.

Whatever you call the dominant European planting style of the past 20 years – New Perennial, prairie or low-input, high-impact – there is no getting away from the fact that many of the key plants in this approach are American. In high summer, a northern-hemisphere bed may well feature a mix of grasses and hard workers, such as rudbeckia and sanguisorba, and with good reason. But to an American observer there is almost always something vital missing from this kind of landscape: big rocks. In New England, there are boulders galore, and low walls of smooth, irregular fieldstone criss-crossing the countryside, giving a tangible sense of a region steeped, waist high, in its agrarian past. With American wildflowers self-seeding along white picket fences, hopes of finding adventurous native planting are too often dashed. It is encouraging therefore to find a landscape gardener such as Caleb Davis, whose considered approach to plants and stones is inseparable from the demands of his very particular locality.

Mount Desert Island is reached by a bridge from the coast of Maine, with more than half of its 108 square miles given over to National parkland. Other areas are carved into private estates, originally claimed in the 19th century by the nation's



"I'm drawn to the blues and purples," says Caleb. "Plants in that spectrum work well here." In this area, looking out to the Acadia National Park, a mix of *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' and *Amsonia hubrichtii* run across several beds, while *Echinops ritro* and *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Skyracer' add height. Shots of yellow come from *Rudbeckia laciniata*.

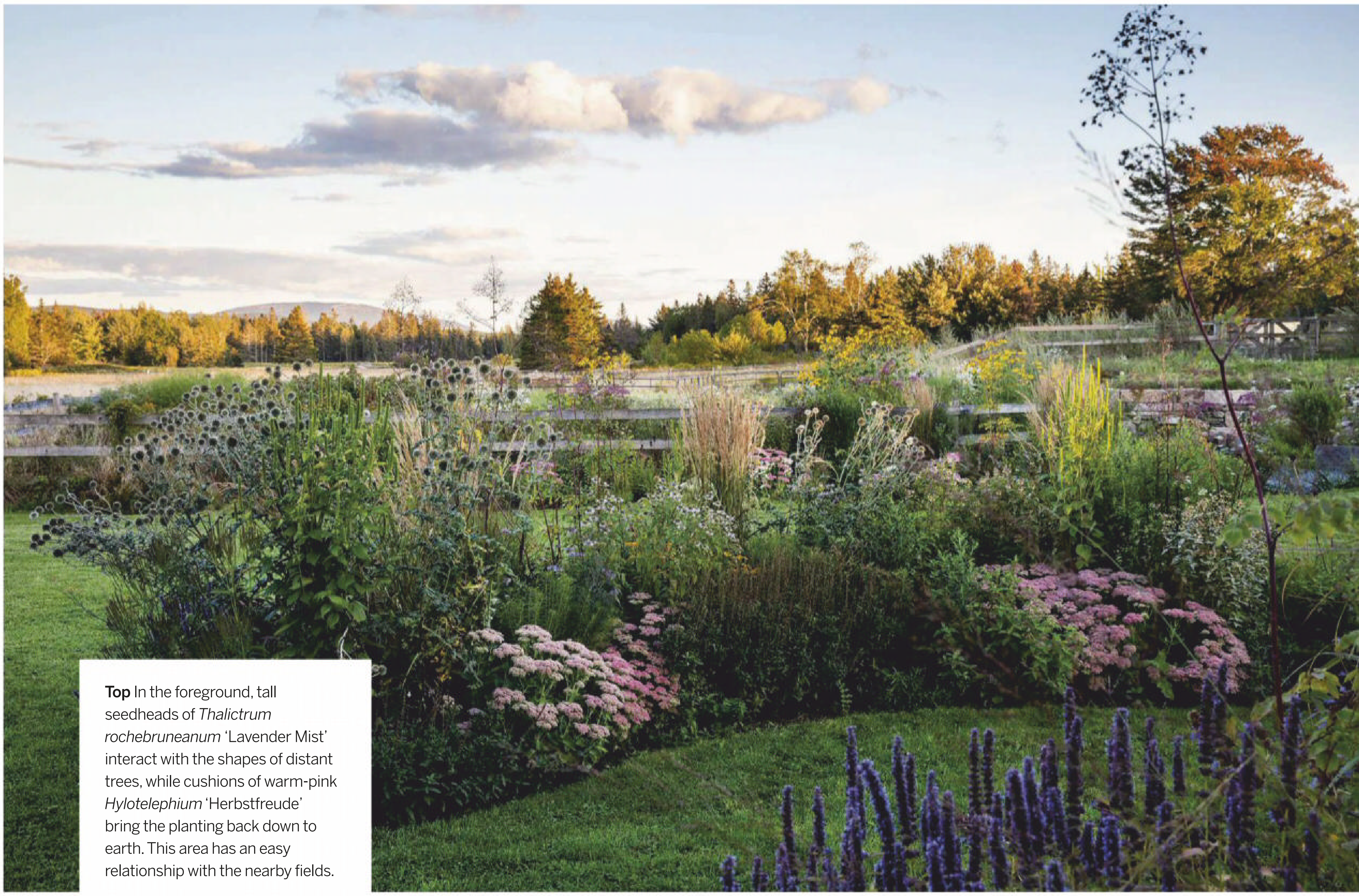
most wealthy, having taken the hint from more artistic rusticators who painted and wrote about the northern wilderness. Here's the rub: summers are short in Maine. Just as the island is stirred into three months of frantic tourism, so its plants must seize the day and live life to the full while they can. American perennials may seem to take a while to get going in a European summer but they are perfectly calibrated for a place where spring can take place in one week.

At this family farmhouse, Caleb's clients live here all year round, which naturally affects the property's appearance. The half-acre lawn at the back was reconfigured and planted in 2018, while the whole garden has developed over 12 years. "There has been an appreciation of a slow pace with a lot of patience in the whole process," says Caleb. "There are so many benefits that come from a slower approach." This leisurely attitude would be less likely if the family skipped the freezing winters, when Maine is blanketed in snow for at least a third of the year.

Instead, the view from the house, towards fallow fields drifting in the direction of the trees and mountains of Acadia National Park, retains some structure in winter. Simple post and rail fences trace the garden's boundary, while walls, steps and furniture make full use of the fieldstones and blockier granite pieces found on the property. Dry stacking them, without the aid of mortar, ▷

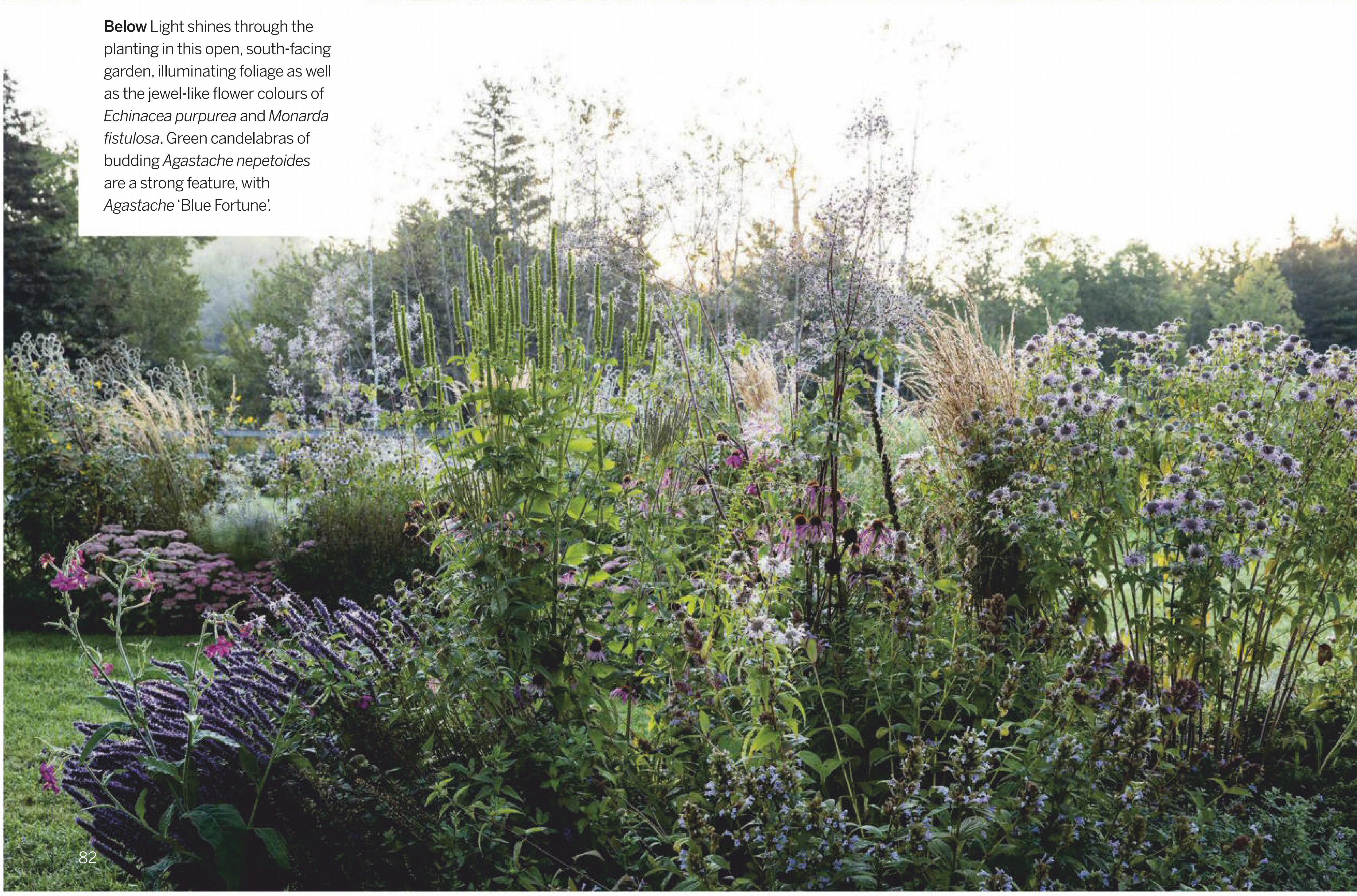
To continue turn to page 84

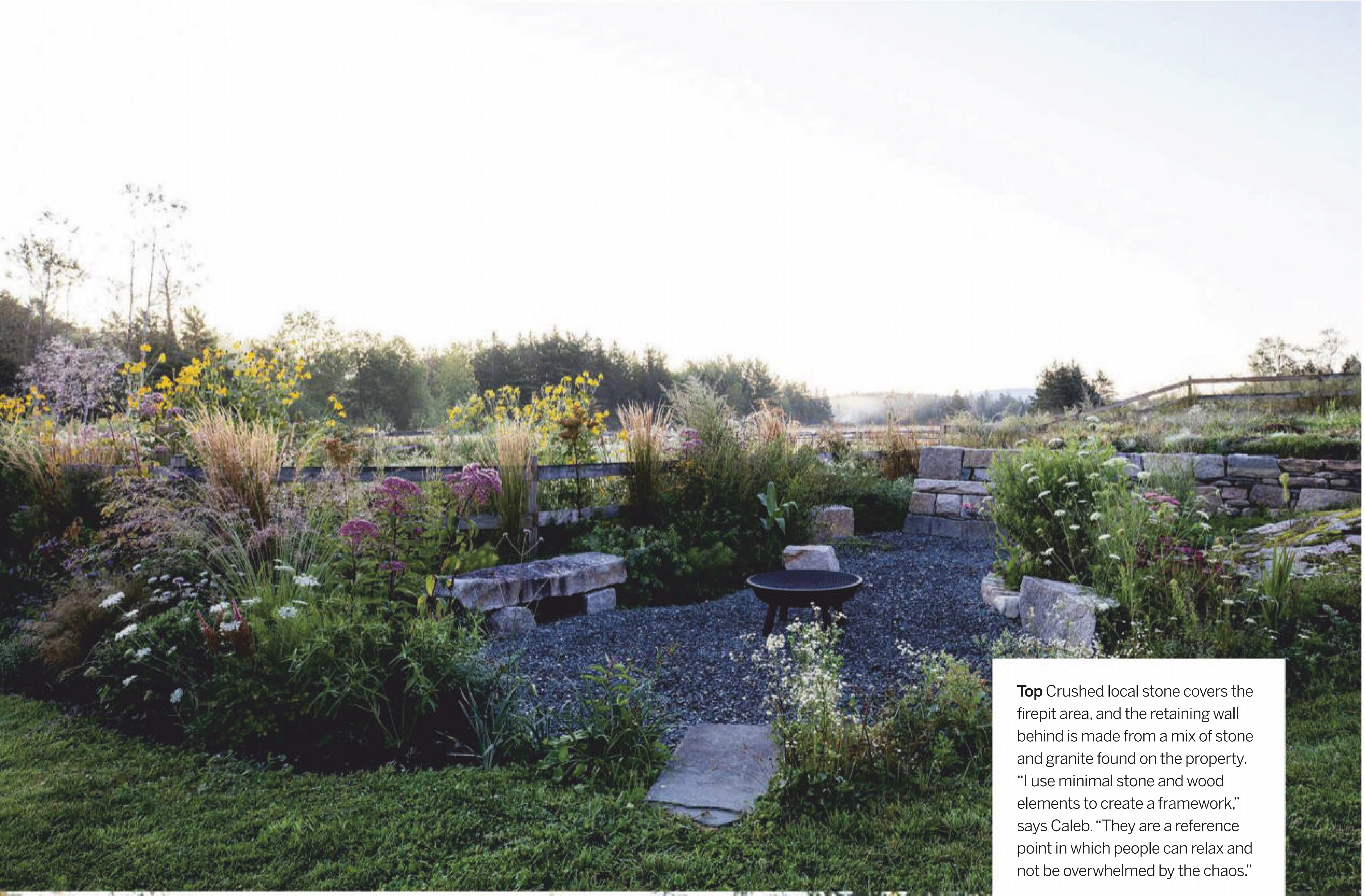
There is a coarseness to the planting that reflects the character of the broader landscape of the region

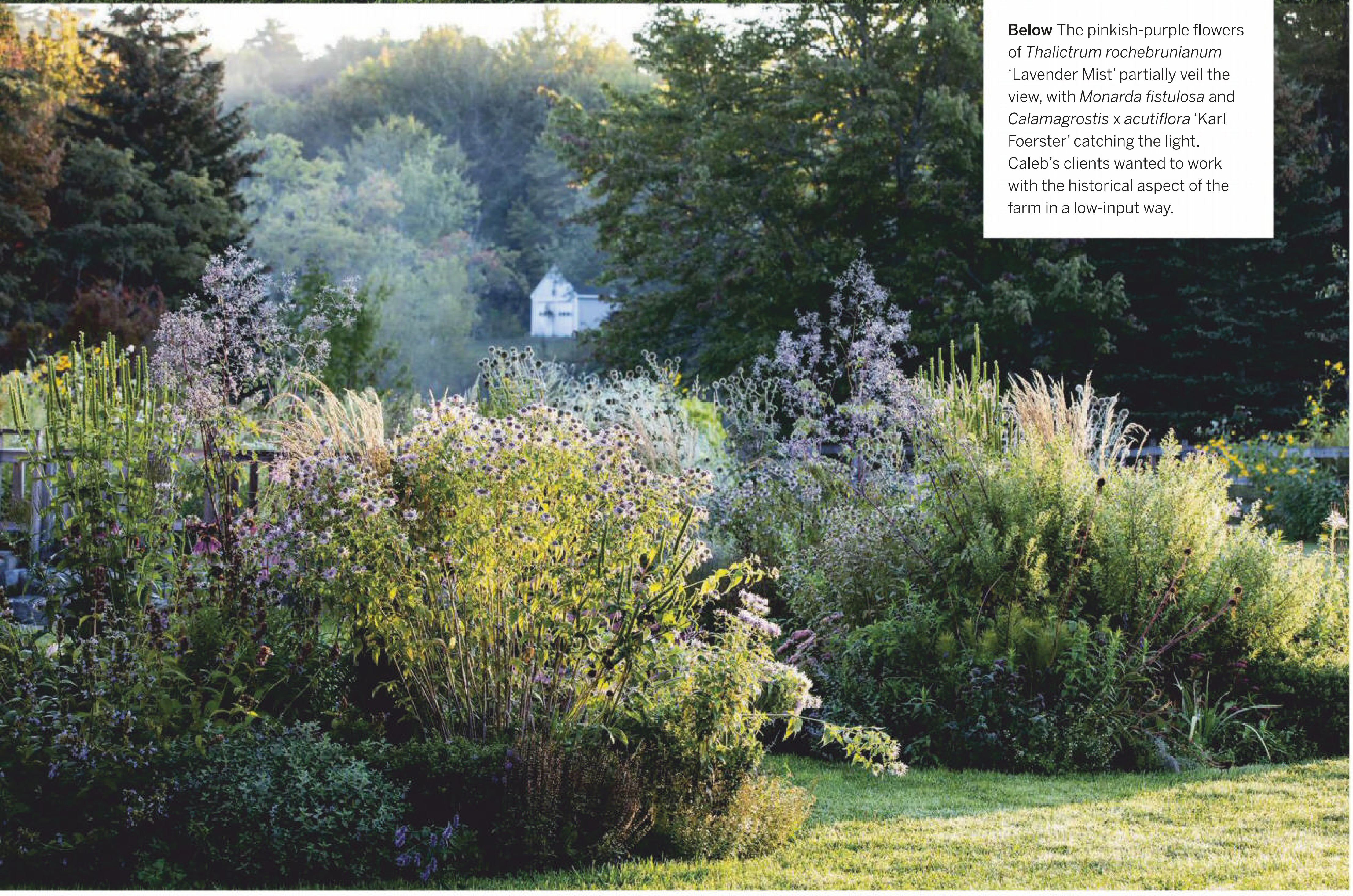


**Top** In the foreground, tall seedheads of *Thalictrum rochebruneanum* 'Lavender Mist' interact with the shapes of distant trees, while cushions of warm-pink *Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude' bring the planting back down to earth. This area has an easy relationship with the nearby fields.

**Below** Light shines through the planting in this open, south-facing garden, illuminating foliage as well as the jewel-like flower colours of *Echinacea purpurea* and *Monarda fistulosa*. Green candelabras of budding *Agastache nepetoides* are a strong feature, with *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune'.







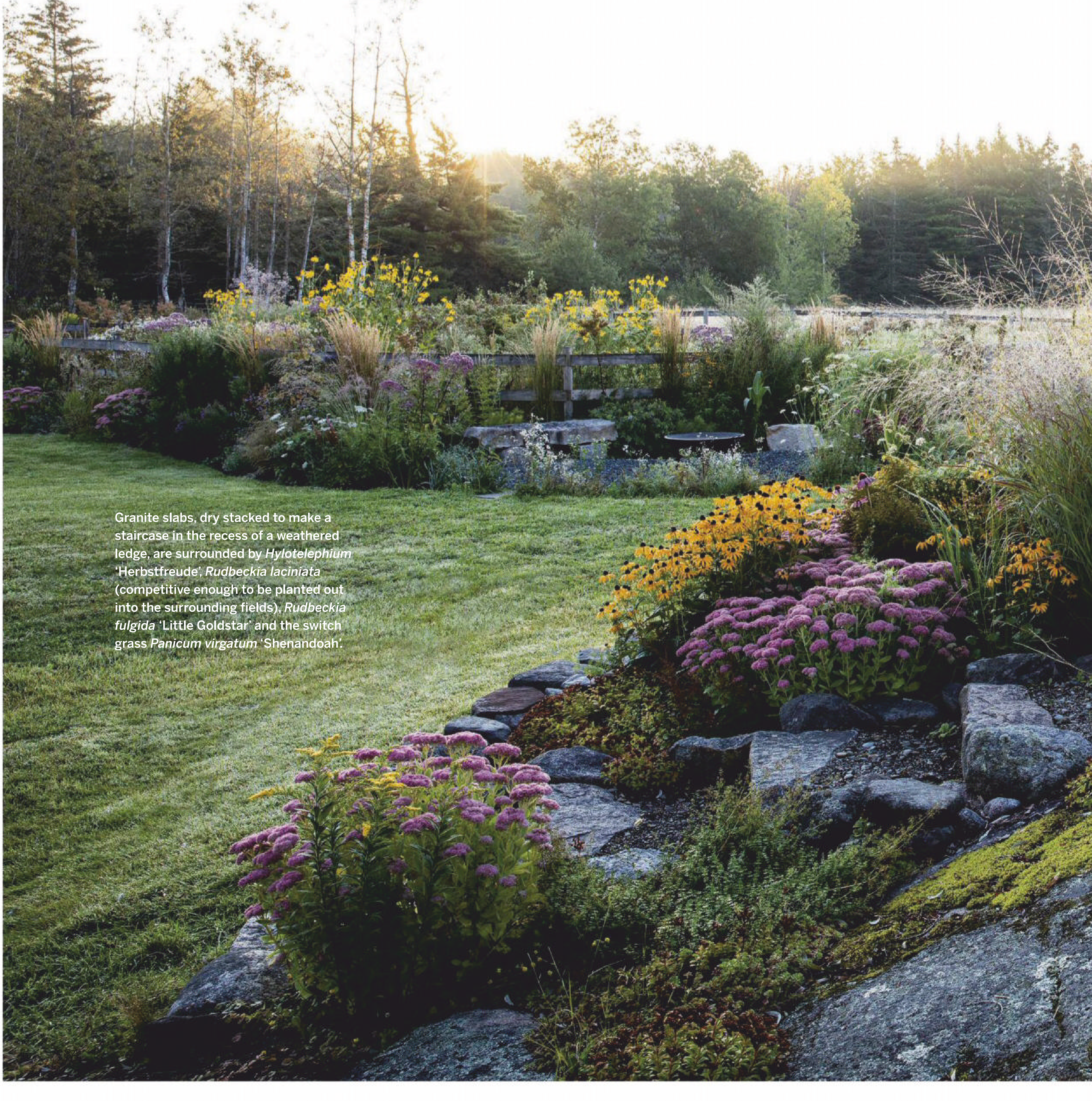
**Top** Crushed local stone covers the firepit area, and the retaining wall behind is made from a mix of stone and granite found on the property. "I use minimal stone and wood elements to create a framework," says Caleb. "They are a reference point in which people can relax and not be overwhelmed by the chaos."

**Below** The pinkish-purple flowers of *Thalictrum rochebrunianum* 'Lavender Mist' partially veil the view, with *Monarda fistulosa* and *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' catching the light. Caleb's clients wanted to work with the historical aspect of the farm in a low-input way.

▷ creates an irregular formality. "Stone is thought of as static, but it's surprisingly dynamic in how it responds to weather," says Caleb. "Seeing the way rain, snow and frost interact with the stone is a beautiful part of our winter landscape." Stone walls also provide a sense of security and enclosure in summer. The firepit area, further away from the house, is carpeted in crushed rock and is held in the protective arm of a 1.5m retaining wall. "Dry-stacked stone provides the kind of frame that people need so much."

Although the property is 60m from the ocean, it is on a quiet side of the island, with prevailing winds blowing from the interior. This is not the place for individualist plants in need of staking but real communities, interacting in a shared endeavour of "vertical layering". They nurture each other, moving with the elements. Airy *Thalictrum rochebrunianum* 'Lavender Mist' reaches its full potential between sturdy candelabras of the giant yellow hyssop *Agastache nepetoides*, edged with *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune', while *Monarda fistulosa* is as untroubled by wind and cold as the ever-reliable grass *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.

"There is a coarseness to the planting, especially apparent as it goes into decay," says Caleb. "That in my mind, reflects the place and the character of the broader landscape of the region." Flowering seeds of wild carrot, yarrow, daisies and goldenrod blow in from the fields, while competitive garden plants are deliberately taken on a trip over the fence. These include *Rudbeckia*



Granite slabs, dry stacked to make a staircase in the recess of a weathered ledge, are surrounded by *Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude', *Rudbeckia laciniata* (competitive enough to be planted out into the surrounding fields), *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Little Goldstar' and the switch grass *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'.

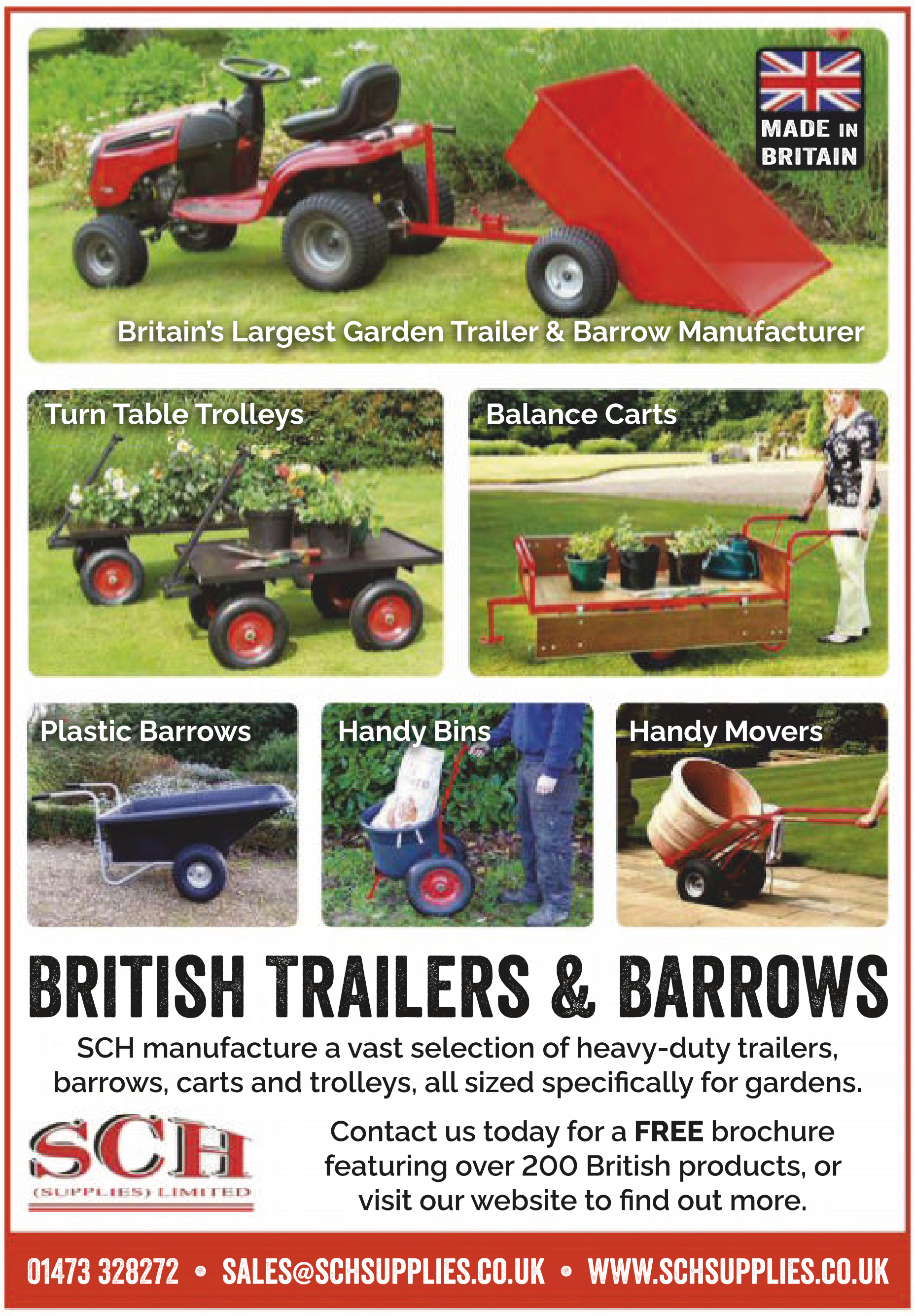
*laciniata*, *Coreopsis tripteris*, *Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta' and *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Gateway'. Some of the most useful blow-ins are non-native, such as *Valeriana officinalis*, blurring the lines between garden and field.

"I am constantly experimenting with what is possible here," says Caleb. He uses ideas from permaculture farming, such as chop-and-drop when moving robust garden plants into the fields. In clearing spaces for them, neighbouring weeds are cut at the base and left on the ground as a mulch. "It's a way of nudging back wild species," he says.

Caleb best describes his own approach: "It's less about the finished product and more about the growing – of plants, communities of organisms, and ourselves." He favours restraint in hard landscaping as well, even when resources are available. "I think that if we put a little more energy into reimagining the lens through which we see the garden, a lot of resources might be conserved in the process of garden-making, with the same amount of reward and enjoyment." □

**USEFUL INFORMATION**
Find out more about Caleb's work at **davisstoneandgarden.com**

Seeing the way rain, snow and frost interact with the stone is a beautiful part of our winter landscape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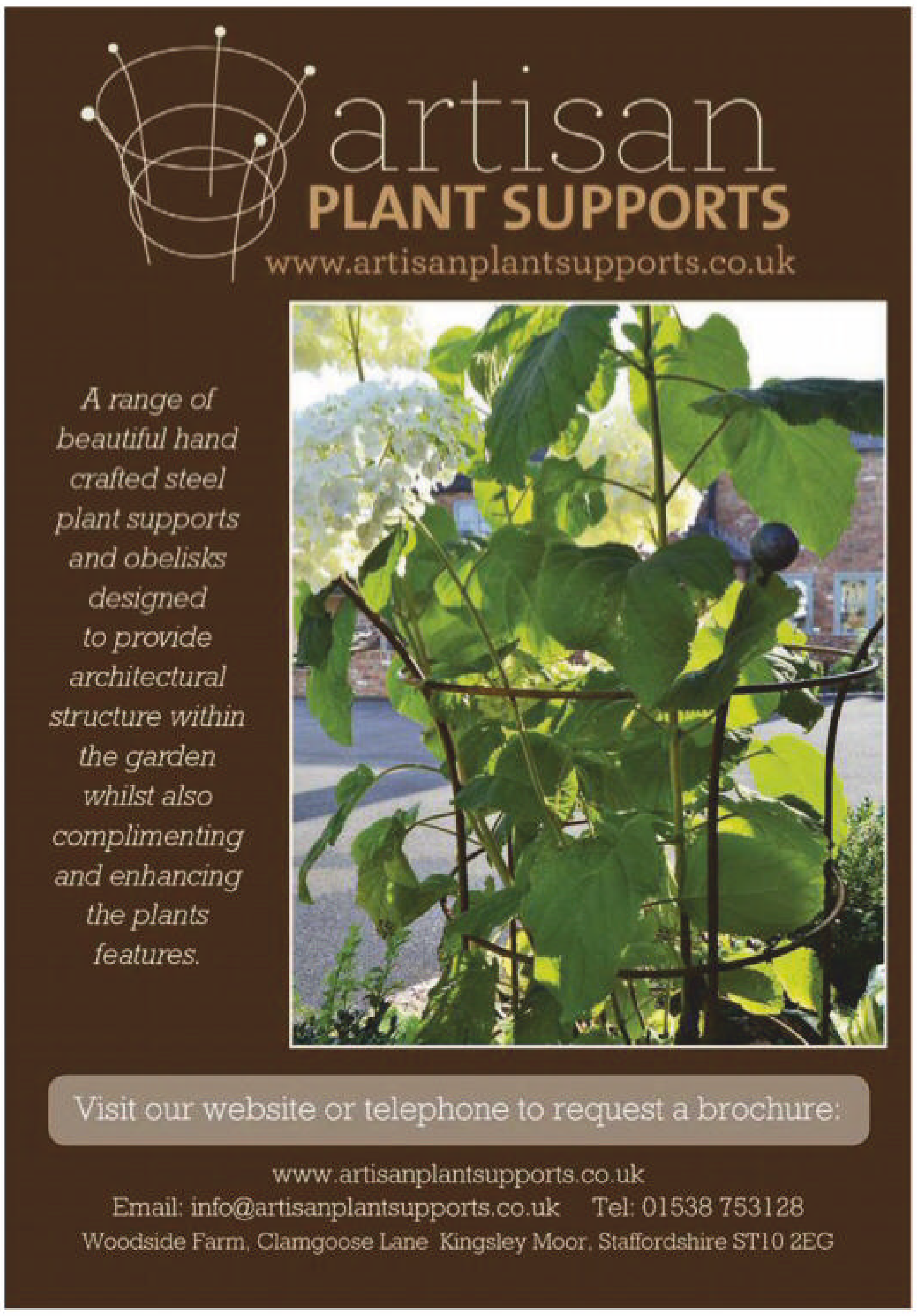
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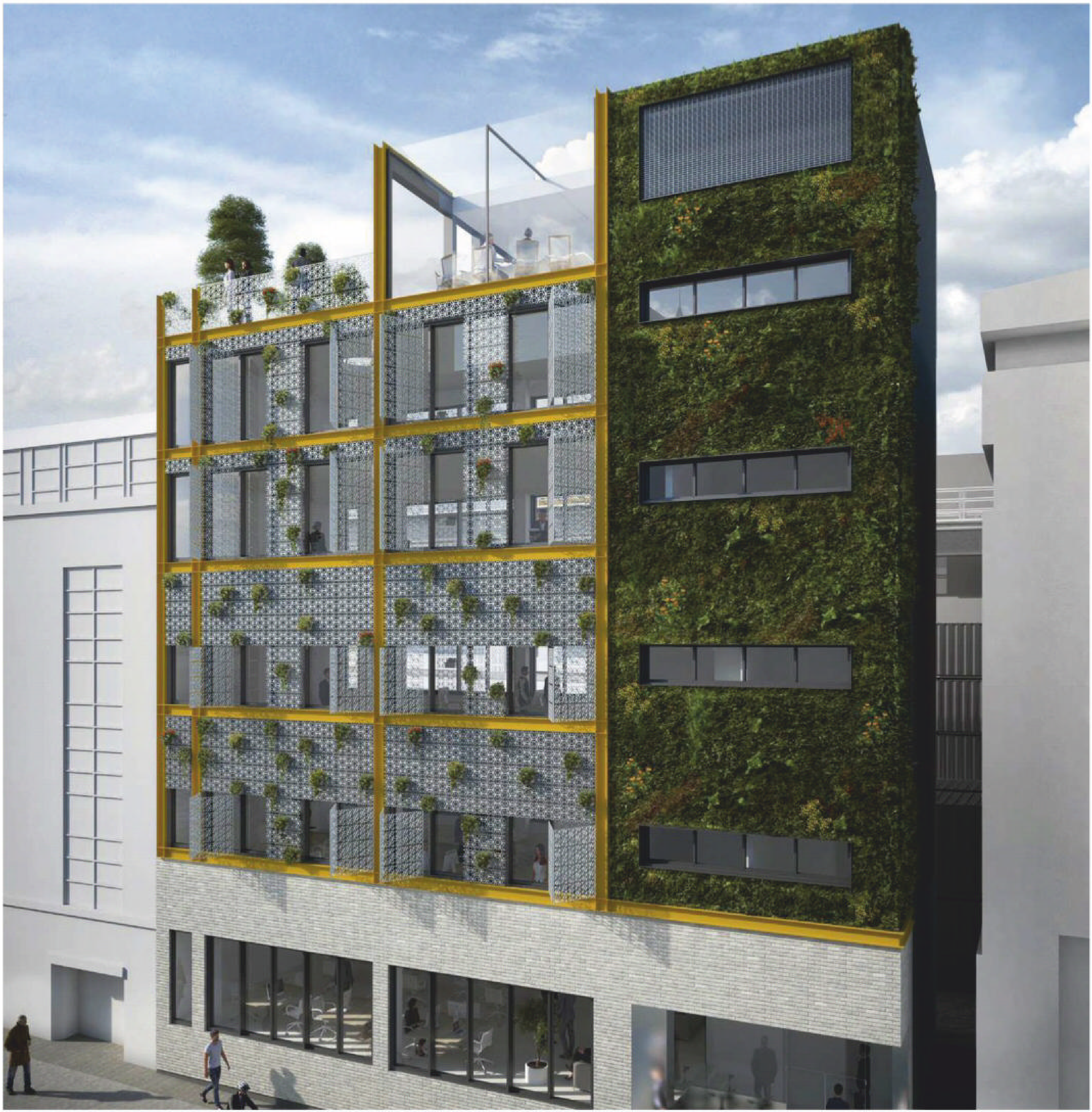

RED SQUIRREL ARCHITECTS

## RECYCLED FACE LIFT

Recycled materials are at the heart of an innovative façade for a remodelled, five-storey commercial building in the City of London. Designed by Red Squirrel Architects, the project at 20 Cousin Lane uses locally shredded aluminium cans re-cast into honeycomb screens that provide solar shading on part of the building and form a framework for planter boxes. On two elevations a living wall that uses compost made from recycled garden waste will create year-round interest from plants such as ferns, evergreen shrubs, bulbs and herbaceous perennials. A new green roof and a rooftop garden with trees in planters complete the planting. **redsquirrelarchitects.com**

# News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

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## ① MAGGIE'S LEEDS

The 26th centre run by the cancer charity Maggie's, has opened in the grounds of St James's University Hospital, Leeds. Designed by Heatherwick Studio, the centre is made from prefabricated, sustainably sourced spruce, and uses porous material such as lime plaster to maintain internal humidity. The building is immersed in a planted landscape designed by landscape architects Balston Agius, with the rooftops sharing the same palette of predominantly British native woodland plants, such as *Crataegus*, *Prunus spinosa* and *Viburnum opulus*, as the ground-level gardens. **maggies.org**

## ② INFLATABLE GREENHOUSES

University of Westminster design student Eliza Hague has created the blueprint for an inflatable greenhouse for the Indian city of Jaipur where the usual material used for greenhouses polyethylene, has to be replaced annually. Eliza's design is made from bamboo pulp, a sustainable alternative, and coated in shellac to make the structures more durable and weather resistant. The greenhouses' structural beams are made from multiple sheets of pulp, folded like origami to create hollow forms, which can be collapsed, transported flat and then inflated on site. **westminster.ac.uk**

## ③ AMIENS FESTIVAL OF GARDENS

The 10th edition of the International Garden Festival – Hortillonnages in Amiens, France – adds 13 new gardens and installations by young landscapers, architects and visual artists to the existing floating and riverside gardens in and around the town. Selected works include *Expansion*, a hut dressed in a colourful mix of living plants and artificial flowers crafted from recycled materials; and *+2°C = 43cm* (shown) by design team Atelier eem, which explores rising temperatures and sea levels. In total some 50 gardens can be explored, on foot or by boat. Until 18 October. **artetjardins-hdf.com**

## ④ BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

Visitors to Birmingham Botanical Gardens will soon be able to get ideas for creating or making over their small outdoor spaces thanks to the Urban Garden area designed by Wilson Associates Garden Design. Divided into four, disability accessible, smaller areas to represent balconies, rooftops and courtyard gardens, each area will provides space for growing edibles, including exotic species, such as lemongrass and eddoe, in raised beds and planters. Built-in bench seating will enable the garden to be used as a demonstration and learning area. **birmingham botanicalgardens.org.uk**

1 HUFTON+CROW; 2 ELIZA HAGUE; 3 ATELIER EEM; 4 WILSON ASSOCIATES.

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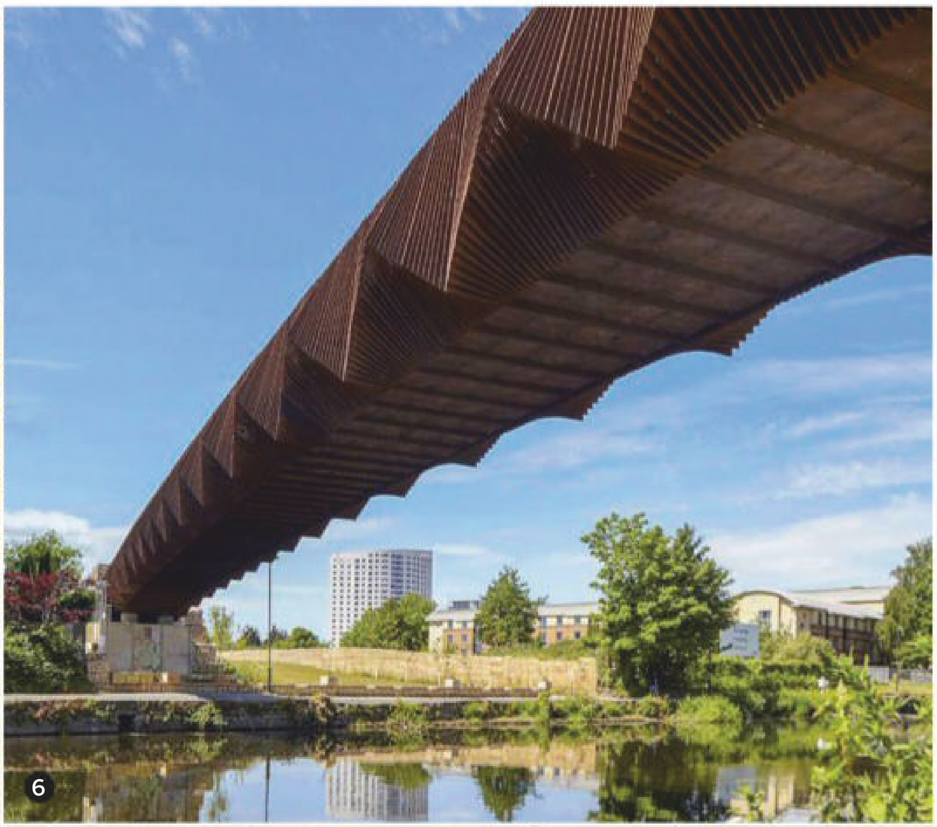

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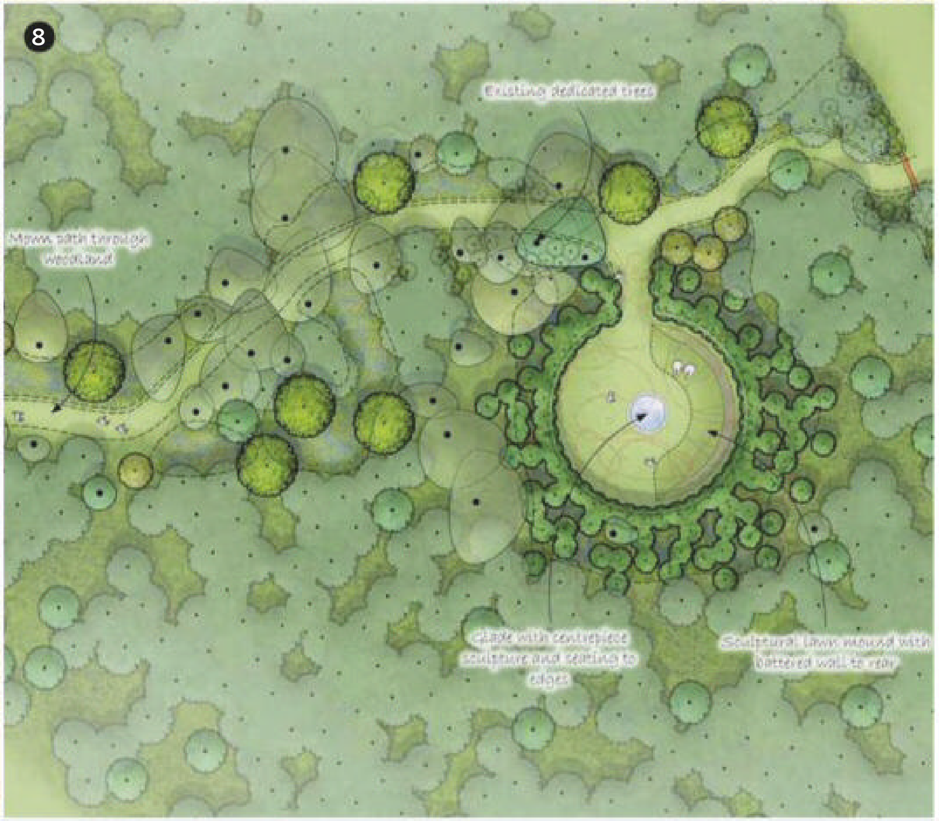

Existing dedicated trees
Mown path through woodland
Glade with centrepiece sculpture and seating to edges
Sculptural lawn mound with battered wall to rear

8

### ⑤ DRY-STONE INSTALLATION

*Emergence*, an installation commissioned by Wedgwood for the RHS Chatsworth Show 2018 and gifted to the Chatsworth House Trust, has been rebuilt at Chatsworth. Created by Carl Hardman of Landmark Walling, the work celebrates the limestone and gritstone of the Derbyshire landscape with a section of traditionally made field wall, built around a large boulder, meeting a more masoned sandstone wall. A large glass fin, inspired by the panels of Joseph Paxton's Great Conservatory at Chatsworth, creates an airy interface between undulating sections. **chatsworth.org**

### ⑥ NEW FOOTBRIDGE FOR LEEDS

A striking new footbridge, by the Halifax-based design studio Gagarin has been erected across the river Aire in Leeds. Built by Hebden Bridge-based structural engineers DP Squared, the 50m-long bridge is made from a series of profiled Corten steel slats that appear to fold and crank across its length, creating a concertina-like effect. The bridge links two new developments in the Climate Innovation District of the city and connects residents of these new homes to the city centre, hopefully encouraging more people to walk and cycle to work. **gagarinstudio.co.uk; dpsquared.net**

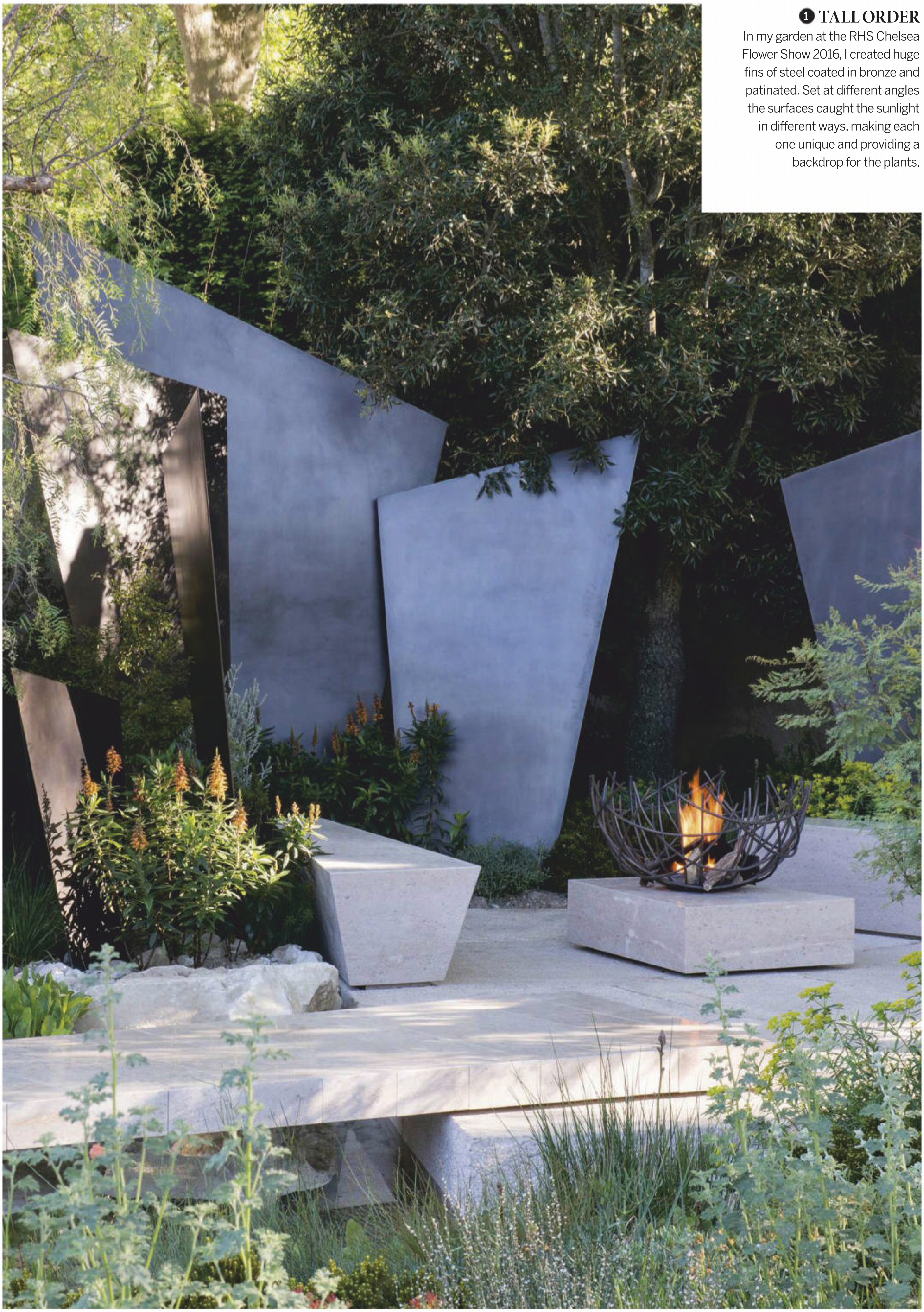
### ⑦ ROYAL DOCKS BENCHES

Visitors to London's Royal Docks this summer can enjoy views of the river from a series of benches designed by emerging architects. The five winning designs from the London Festival of Architecture's 2020 competition Pews & Perches have been installed at different waterside locations, and include *Roly Poly* (shown), a rocking bench designed by Urban Radicals in collaboration with Millimetre and Sanne Visser that takes its inspiration from the signalling buoys and rope-making traditions of the River Thames. The benches will stay in place until the end of autumn. **royaldocks.london**

### ⑧ REMEMBRANCE GLADE

The National Memorial Arboretum's new Remembrance Glade, in partnership with The Royal British Legion, has opened at the 150-acre Staffordshire site. In contrast to the other more formal memorials, this contemplative space, designed by Fira, is approached through fields of poppies. A mown path through woodland leads through a gateway of steam-bent green oak to a perfect circle of white-stemmed Himalayan birches, with a large disc of polished steel as the main focal point. The circular motif continues with a semi-circular mound where visitors can sit. **thenma.org.uk**

5 CARL HARDMAN; 6 ANDREW WALL / GAGARIN STUDIO; 7 LUKE O'DONOVAN;



**① TALL ORDER**

In my garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016, I created huge fins of steel coated in bronze and patinated. Set at different angles the surfaces caught the sunlight in different ways, making each one unique and providing a backdrop for the plants.

HEATHER EDWARDS / GAP PHOTOS. DESIGN ANDY STURGEON

# Metal

Metals come in many forms, from galvanised zincs to rusted steels and can look as at home in a garden as wood or stone, but it is their inherent strength and durability that makes them so useful for garden design

WORDS ANDY STURGEON

I'm an advocate of natural materials. Wood and stone underpin much of my work but I include metal in that list. You can dig it out of the ground, after all, although you have to mix a couple of metals together to make bronze and other alloys. Its look can certainly become 'natural'. This is because it often oxidises, weathers and patinates bringing a warmth and richness to the finish. Metal is versatile. It can be fiercely modern or charmingly traditional and even rustic. You can fashion a tiny detail, such as a hinge or a water spout, or something vast like a monolithic wall. Its inherent strength and durability is fundamentally what makes it so useful.

Corten steel is structural steel. It rusts on the outside and then stops rusting with the core remaining intact. I designed large, curved sheets of it for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2001 having seen the work of Richard Serra and its use in the Netherlands, particularly in architecture. At first a bright, rich, orangey colour it darkens over time but always looks incredible when combined with any green foliage and for that reason has remained fashionable and continues to crop up every year at RHS Chelsea. It's also maintenance free and if it gets marked you can even out the finish by cleaning with cola. Being structural you can use it to make a robust staircase or a laser-cut screen, a pergola, a planter or a raised bed. It undoubtedly works best on a larger scale where it becomes a backdrop for planting, rather than when it is used as a subtle, delicate detail.

> Metal is versatile. It can be fiercely modern or charmingly traditional and even rustic. You can fashion a tiny detail, such as a hinge, or something vast like a monolithic wall

Copper is a great material for the garden but it's soft and not very strong so more useful for smaller objects, such as light fittings. Otherwise it can be used in sheets to clad a stronger internal core, perhaps a concrete planter or a steel water chute. When brand new it's bright and shiny but this doesn't last long. Untreated copper will quickly oxidise becoming darker at first and then verdigris with that green patina of age, which is beautiful and unbeatable. But if you want to retain that warm, rich old-penny look that's somewhere between shiny and green then you need to apply a wax finish once a year to seal it.

Bronze is similar in many ways and will fairly quickly settle into the dark chocolatey brown of Landseer's lions in Trafalgar Square. The difference is that it is very strong but is also prohibitively expensive when used as anything more than a surface finish. A whole industry has now sprung up that sprays the molten metal on to a cheaper internal framework or surface. Increasingly popular in architecture it can be used as a really sophisticated finish for gates, railings and furniture and then artificially patinated and sealed. That patination process is what you want because it introduces variety and depth in the colour, which is warm and glowing and not possible with any painted finish. It tends to be more dramatic and catches the light better on larger surfaces rather than the smaller details of railings.

There are some good products developed for buildings that translate to gardens. Roof cladding systems in particular. Pre-weathered zinc and copper are artificially aged so they remain stable and don't weather further, which makes them reliable because you know exactly how they will look in years to come and because of the intended use of the product, it won't deteriorate. I've clad walls and planters in various finishes that the manufacturers intended for the sides of sky scrapers or the roofs of factories.

The most common metal finish in a garden, and probably one of the best solutions, is galvanised steel. All metal fabricators can produce it, and it's relatively inexpensive and long lasting. Although shiny at first it soon mellows to a soft grey that combines well with timber, which time will always turn a contrasting yet complementary silver grey. This makes the two materials perfect bedfellows for gates, pergolas and so on. Galvanised steel will not draw attention to itself, which is an asset in many garden settings, unlike stainless steel, which can often clamour for attention.

Stainless steel also has its place. The finish can be brushed rather than polished but if you garden near the coast all metals will oxidise faster in the salt-laden air, copper will verdigris rapidly and even stainless steel will rust unless it's marine grade.

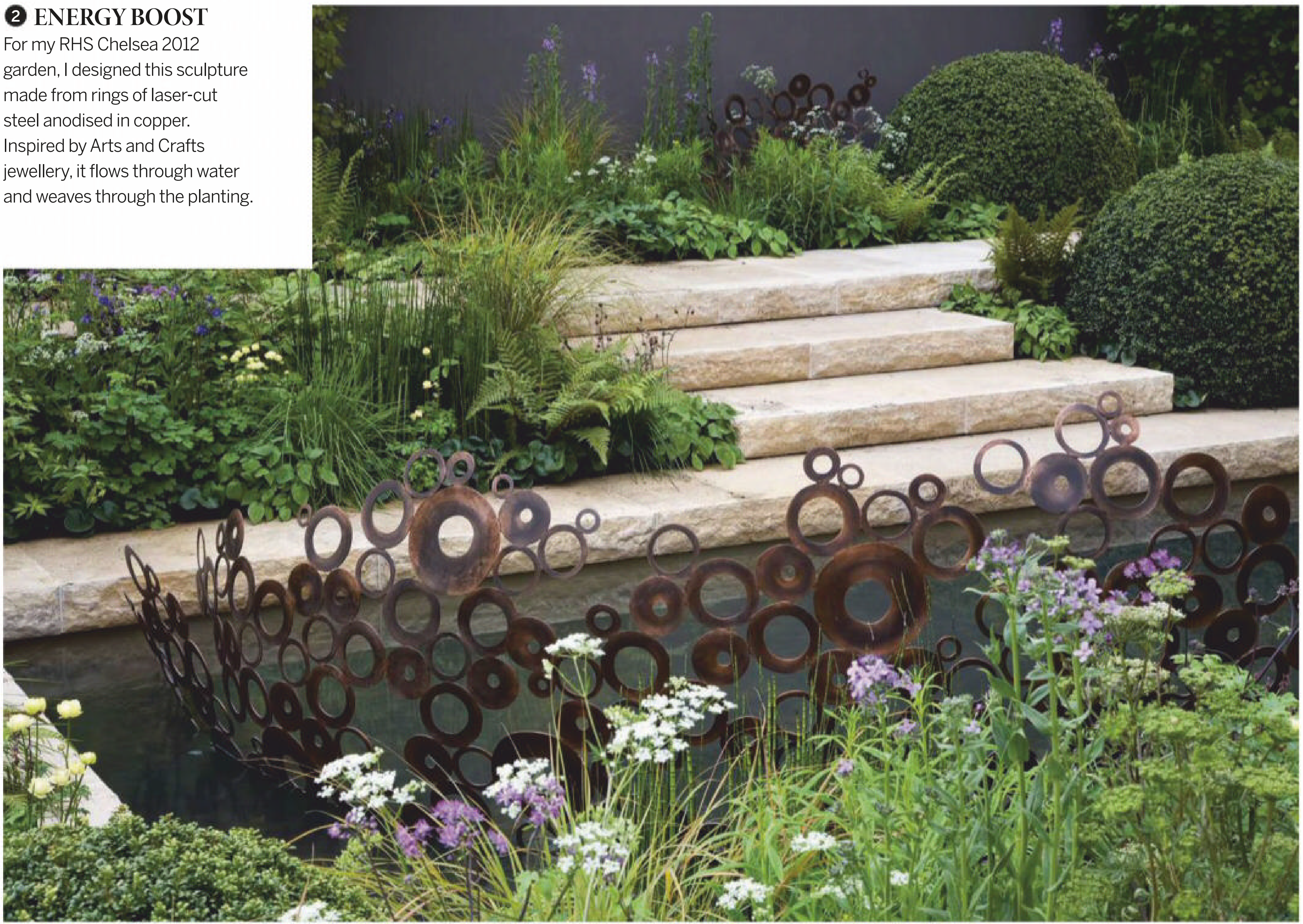
It is not just what the metal is that's important. It's also how it's made and put together. Most fabricators are engineers. They deal with precise angles, flat finishes and perfect curves, which for some projects is ideal. Artistic blacksmiths on the other hand bring an entirely different skill to the party. Hammered finishes, forging of metalwork and flowing curves made by eye with a fire, a hammer and an anvil. □

**Andy Sturgeon** is an internationally renowned landscape and garden designer. He is the winner of eight Gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, including Best in Show in 2019. **andysturgeon.com**

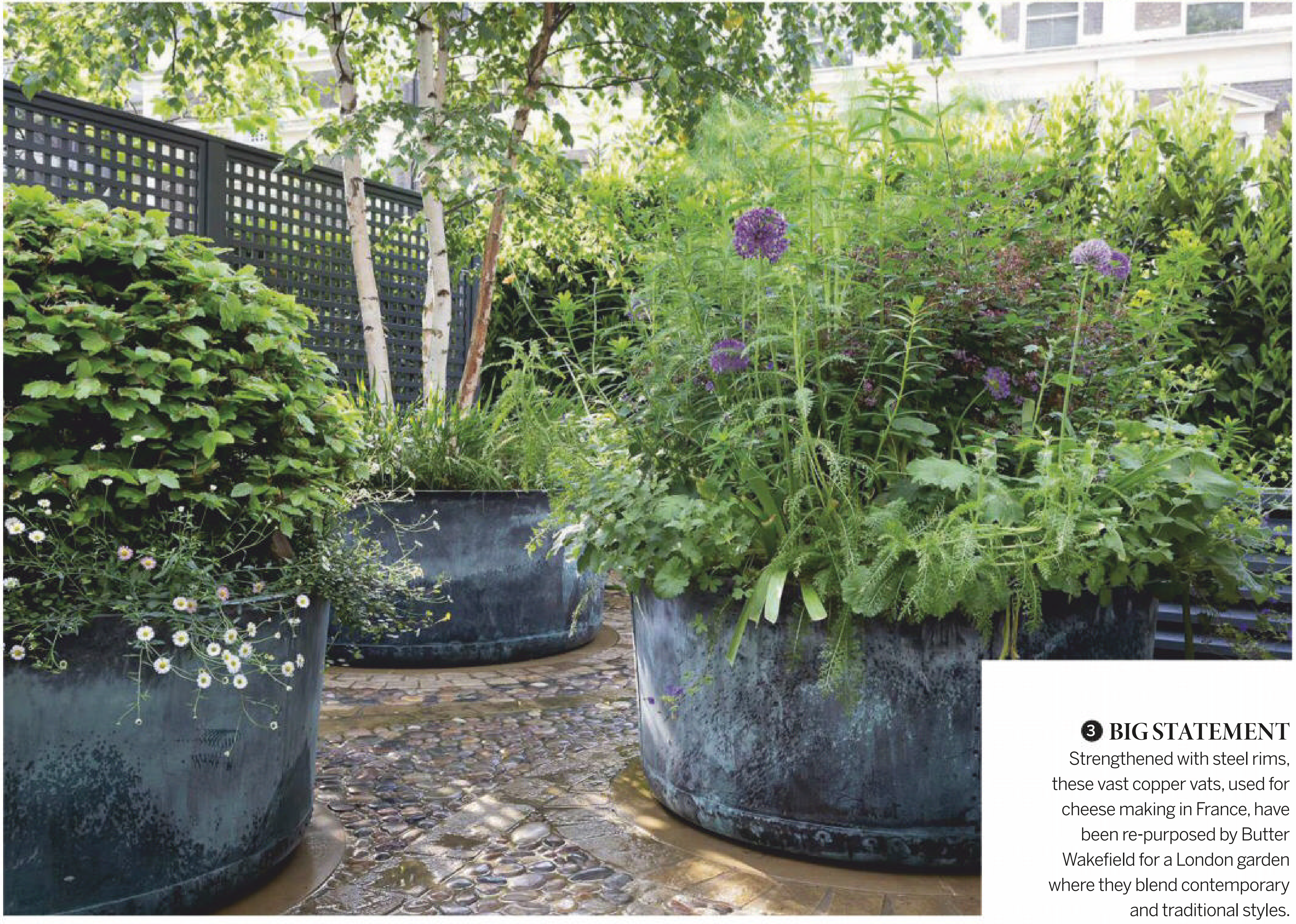
Turn the page for more ideas on working with metal

### ② ENERGY BOOST

For my RHS Chelsea 2012 garden, I designed this sculpture made from rings of laser-cut steel anodised in copper. Inspired by Arts and Crafts jewellery, it flows through water and weaves through the planting.



STEVEN WOOSTER / GAP PHOTOS. DESIGN ANDY STURGEON



### ③ BIG STATEMENT

Strengthened with steel rims, these vast copper vats, used for cheese making in France, have been re-purposed by Butter Wakefield for a London garden where they blend contemporary and traditional styles.

BUTTER WAKEFIELD / ELEANOR WALPOLE

### ❹ FINE LINES

Designed by Sir Cameron Mackintosh for his Somerset garden, this gate was fashioned by a local artistic blacksmith. This approach brings a special personality to a garden often elevating it to another level.

JASON INGRAM

### ❺ STEPPING UP

Sarah Price has used simple Corten steel steps, which echo the geometry of the built forms and contrast with the elegant planting. This striking feature is key to the garden's success and is both sculptural and functional.

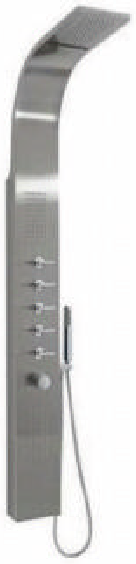
STEVEN WOOSTER / THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP

SOURCEBOOK

# Outdoor showers

## Cool off with one of these nine stylish showers

COMPILED BY KATIE DUTTON



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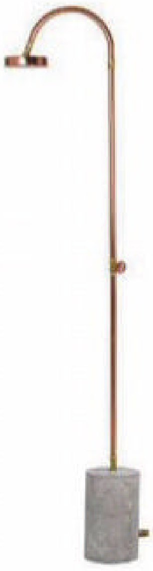
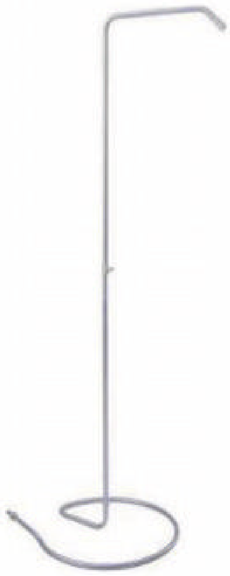
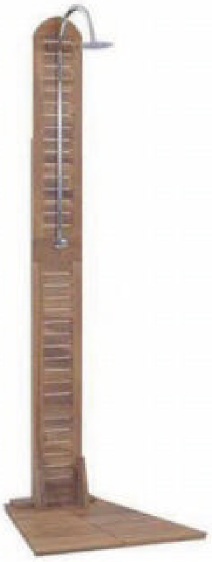


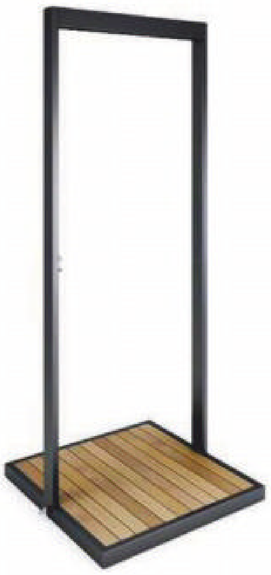
**EASY TO INSTALL**
Seletti Aquart Lux Outdoor Shower,
£220, Made In Design,
020 7692 4001, madeindesign.co.uk



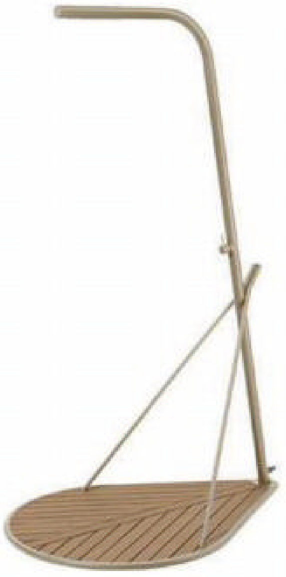
**STAINLESS STEEL**
Weltevree Serpentine Garden Shower,
£255.90, Connox,
020 3880 0027, connox.co.uk



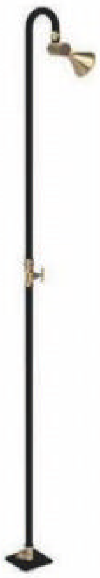
**NON SLIP BASE**
Solok Freestanding Outdoor Shower,
£222.99, Wayfair,
0800 169 0423, wayfair.co.uk



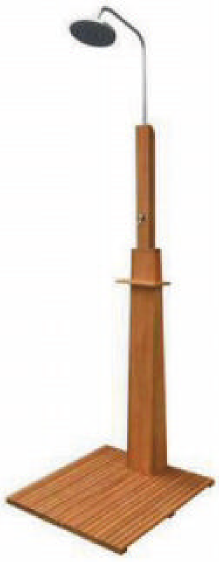
**SCULPTURAL**
Röshults Garden Shower,
£3,797, Connox,
020 3880 0027, connox.co.uk



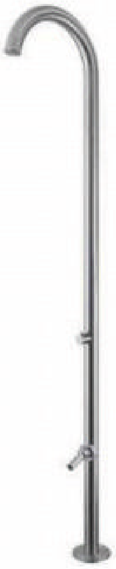
**CURVED**
Fermob Pasaia Outdoor Shower,
£870, Made In Design,
020 7692 4001, madeindesign.co.uk



**ADJUSTABLE**
Tradewinds Fieldshow'r,
€351, Archiproducts,
+39 080 554 3553, archiproducts.com



**ECO DESIGN**
Eucalyptus Wood and Steel Outdoor Shower,
£116.99, Mano Mano,
01766 808005, manomano.co.uk



**CLASSIC**
Doumet Freestanding Outdoor Shower,
£1,069.99, Wayfair,
0800 169 0423, wayfair.co.uk

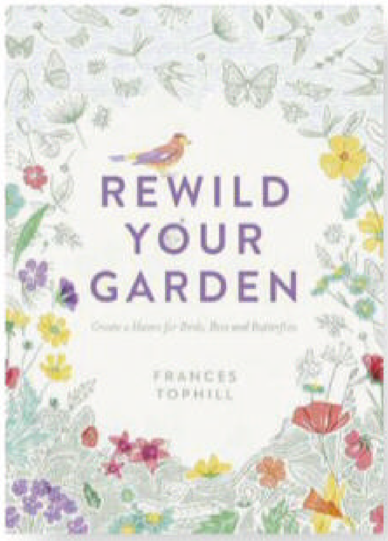
# DOWNTOOLS

*Book reviews, back issues, crossword*

Garden writer and critic Tim Richardson takes a look at one of the UK's favourite gardens in *Sissinghurst: the Dream Garden*, reviewed on page 97.

JASON INGRAM

# BOOK REVIEWS



## REWILD YOUR GARDEN: CREATE A HAVEN FOR BIRDS, BEES AND BUTTERFLIES

by Frances Tophill

Quercus Books, £15
ISBN 978-1529410259

*An attractively illustrated book that makes a strong case for the idea – when it comes to biodiversity, at least – that a little less control goes a long way.*

*Reviewer Natasha Goodfellow is a freelance garden writer and editor.*

When, in 2000, Isabella Tree and her husband Charlie Burrell downed tools and let nature take its course at their 3,500-acre estate in West Sussex, many observers thought they were mad. Twenty years on, with their land now teeming with life including rare species, such as purple emperor butterflies and turtle doves, they have kick-started a new appreciation for how wildlife, ecosystems and biodiversity can be not just conserved but restored.

This approach might work well on a large scale but what can the average gardener, who still wants to look out on to something aesthetically pleasing, hope to achieve? This is the question tackled by writer and *Gardeners' World* presenter Frances Tophill in a book that encourages us to consider the garden ecosystem both as a whole and as part of the wider landscape all around us. Though she doesn't say it anywhere near as bluntly, plants for pollinators and bee hotels are all very well, but they are only part of the solution. The woodlouse, the ant and the earwig are all just as essential – as are bacteria in the soil and fungi and mosses in the ground layer above.

The book begins with a brief assessment of the different levels of the garden ecosystem, from the soil to the canopy layer with suggestions for three different approaches for each, varying from the highly controlled to the almost total non-intervention that characterises true rewilding. Tophill then goes on to consider the various components of a typical garden, from ponds and lawns to kitchen gardens and flower beds, for each advising on ways to attract as much wildlife as possible.

Combined with beautiful illustrations by Jo Parry, this is an encouraging and supportive book that aims to help you find the level of rewilding that is right for you, while acknowledging that even the smallest of steps can make an enormous difference.

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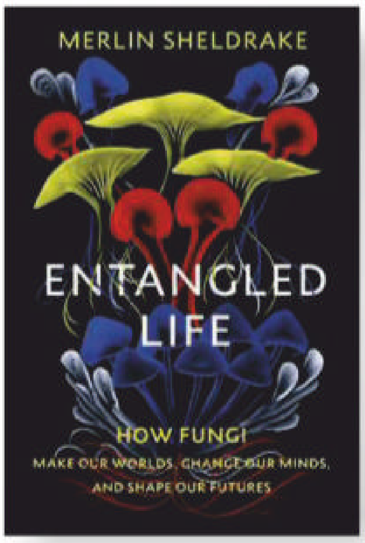


## ENTANGLED LIFE: HOW FUNGI MAKE OUR WORLDS, CHANGE OUR MINDS AND SHAPE OUR FUTURES

by Merlin Sheldrake

Bodley Head, £20
ISBN 978-1847925190

*A deeply researched and thought-provoking look at fungi for anyone who is curious about the natural world around us.*

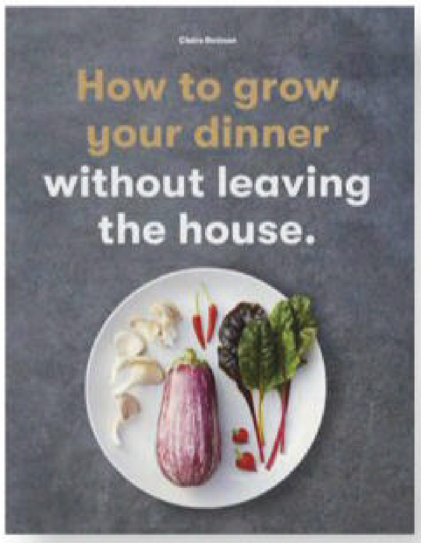
*Reviewer Jonny Bruce is a plantsman and garden writer.*

In the world of horticulture the symbiosis between plants and fungi is an increasingly familiar yet not deeply understood concept. In recent years garden centres have capitalised on this growing fungal enthusiasm with an expanding range of mycorrhizal products – often heralded with an apothecary's fervour as panaceas for plant health. Thankfully Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life* shines an intelligent, and often humorous, light on the innumerable fungi that occupy not just the living soil but have insinuated themselves into every aspect of daily life.

Part scientific study, part autobiography, part meditation on landscape and our place within it, *Entangled Life* begins with a suitably personal prologue where Sheldrake vividly describes tracking with his fingertips the diminishing path of a single tree root through the leaf-litter of the jungle floor. His rich language evokes the olfactory sensations of this gateway to the networks on which, as he boldly states: 'all life depends.' This immersive and tactile engagement sets the tone for the rest of the book where each chapter is woven with his own experience. There are distinct echoes of nature writers such as Nan Shepherd and it provides a refreshing alternative to the dry objectivity of so many fungal field guides.

Stories of psychedelic trips or scrumping cider apples from Newton's own tree are entertaining but this is no lightweight text. There is a wealth of research and fascinating detail to satisfy the scientifically minded as well as a profound restructuring about how we think about mushrooms. Particularly powerful are his arguments against the view of mycelium as merely passive connectors within this wood wide web, presenting them rather as managing the flow of signals and nutrients for the benefit of the fungal network itself.

A remarkable and engaging book, *Entangled Life* should appeal to any inquisitive mind interested in our natural world.



**HOW TO GROW YOUR DINNER: WITHOUT LEAVING THE HOUSE**
by Claire Ratinon

Laurence King
Publishing, £12.99
ISBN 978-1786277145

*A perfect starting point for any flat-dwelling urbanites who have fallen for houseplants and now want to extend their love of growing.*

*Reviewer Alys Fowler is a plantswoman and writer.*

*How to Grow Your Own Dinner* is clearly aimed at the 'so you've fallen in love with houseplants' gang, and is certain to take their love outdoors, whatever their space might be. Author Claire Rainton understands that might not be much more than a few hanging baskets outside a window, a windswept balcony or just a bit of fence, but she's not daunted by such limits and doesn't want you to be either.

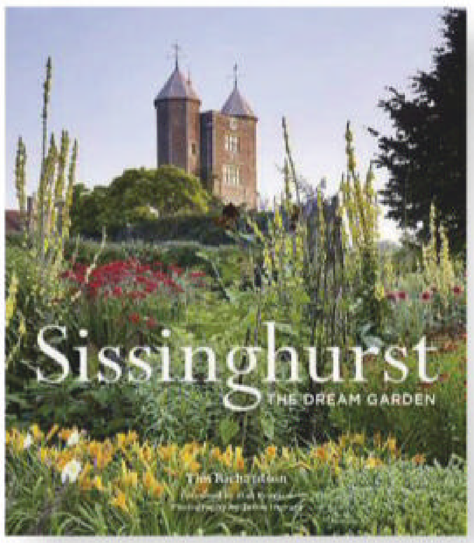
Understanding that her audience needs step-by-step advice all the way through, Rainton's book builds a clear and concise picture of how to get going. It doesn't aim to teach everything, the selection of vegetables are a reliable bunch that can withstand urban growing and are suited to pot culture, such as chillies, tomatoes, salad leaves and green beans, and how to grow multiple sowings of things such as baby beets to make the most of space.

Each profile manages to balance the need to be clear and simple with just enough extra to mean it is not light on details. For instance, for each vegetable there is a section on harvesting, which can often be a little baffling to beginners.

I particularly like the addition of edible mushrooms. The influx of easy-to-use and affordable growing kits makes things such as oyster mushrooms a wise choice for many urban growers as a useful food to tuck into a shadier corner.

Each topic gets a double-page spread with a pleasing, simple layout. It feels fresh and unfussy, which matches the writing style.

It's a perfect gift for the budding gardener as it is written by someone experienced in all the nuances of city growing from lugging containers to top-floor flats to the need for small-scale nutrient production, such as a wormery. As an engaging guide to getting going, I hope it gets a whole new generation hooked.



**SISSINGHURST: THE DREAM GARDEN**
by Tim Richardson

Frances Lincoln, £30
ISBN 978-0711237346

*The most up-to-date exploration of the garden at Sissinghurst, how it was created and why it remains such a great and much-loved garden.*

*Reviewer Annie Gatti is a garden writer.*

In the introduction to the latest in an impressive roll call of books about Sissinghurst – the Kent garden made from scratch by Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West – Tim Richardson sets out his intention to tease out 'the invisible meanings of the garden, which exist alongside its more tangible sensory delights'. His book is a hybrid. Part horticultural tour, part exploration of the dreamlike qualities of the garden's spaces, it also charts the move away from Vita's 'romantic chaotic creativity' to a regime of horticultural exactitude under the National Trust, which took on the garden in 1967. Bringing the story up to date, Richardson reveals how, since the appointment of Dan Pearson as 'godparent', and under the tenure of Troy Scott Smith, who until recently was head gardener, the garden has once more regained the tone and feel of Harold and Vita's intensely personal retreat.

There is no set route round the garden but Richardson's tour logically starts with the approach and ends with Delos, a space that was conceived as a Mediterranean garden but had become, in Vita's words 'a queer amorphous area'. The photographs of this final chapter reveal the re-landscaped space, with planting native to the rocky Greek island that inspired the original terraced garden. In the middle of the tour, Richardson breaks off to expound his idea that in many ways Sissinghurst is a Modernist garden, influenced by 'stream of consciousness' literature.

Drawing richly from Harold and Vita's writings, Richardson's text conjures up the fleeting moments in each of the spaces, the transcendent experiences and disorientations that, for him, make this a great garden. Jason Ingram's images, most magically capturing the garden at early dawn, provide a feast of views and close-ups that are informatively captioned and will be a compensation for those who cannot visit the garden.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## FERMENTATION

by Rachel de Thample

Bloomsbury Publishing, £16.99
ISBN 978-1408873540

*With more than 80 recipes, from sourdough to sauerkraut and kimchi to kombucha, a book that demystifies the making of fermented foods.*

*Reviewer Juliet Giles is production editor of* Gardens Illustrated.

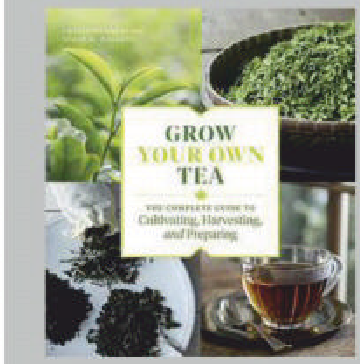
There's nothing new about fermentation. As a way of enhancing and preserving food it's as old as the hills, but it's a culinary technique few of us have tried in our own homes beyond turning foraged fruits into country wines. But as we begin to realise the importance of friendly gut bacteria on our health, live fermented foods are becoming ever more popular, as is the desire to make our own. A desire this latest Handbook from River Cottage hopes to fulfil.

Author Rachel de Thample, who runs fermentation courses at River Cottage, sets out to demystify this strange alchemy of transforming everyday food into something that is both more nutritious and delicious through the action of yeast or (healthy) bacteria. She begins by explaining the science behind fermentation, along with the equipment and basic ingredients you'll need. Key among these is time. Fermentation is not a quick process, although most of the recipes here will be ready in a couple of weeks or even days, and unlike baking, timings are not precise. In fact, possibly what turns this science into art is learning to decide when these living foods are ready to eat.

In helping you develop this skill, de Thample is a patient tutor. Her recipe section starts with a step-by-step guide to making a simple sauerkraut, and once you know the ratio of salt to vegetables you can adapt this recipe to almost any vegetable of your choice. The possibilities, it seems, are endless, although de Thample does offer her own variations on this classic dish, including the spicy Curido, from El Salvador, and the surprisingly tasty Dandelion Krautchi, along with a host of other recipes from probiotic pickles and sauces to tangy dairy-free cheesecakes and sourdough donuts. All are beautifully photographed and clearly explained, and all are ones you'll want to try yourself once you have enjoyed the thrill of your first fermentation. This old way of eating could very soon become your new obsession.

## Other books

From botanical illustration to creating a meadow, a selection of the other books to consider this month.



### GROW YOUR OWN TEA

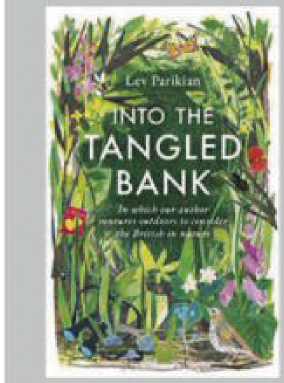
by Christine Parks and Susan M Walcott, Timber Press, £18.99, ISBN 978-1604699319

In this helpful new title you can learn how to grow, cultivate and harvest white, green, oolong and (the nation's favourite) black tea in your own garden.

### LILIAN SNELLING: THE RHODODENDRON AND PRIMULA DRAWINGS

by HJ Noltie, RGBE Publications, £9.99, ISBN 978-1910877340

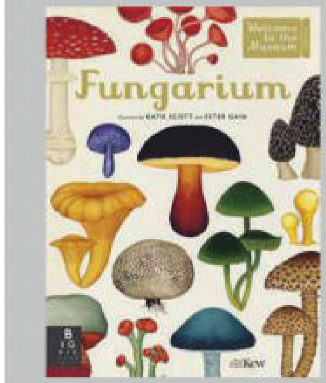
Snelling was one of the most important British botanical artists, and here her story and illustrations are deservedly brought to light.



### INTO THE TANGLED BANK

by Lev Parikian,
Elliott & Thompson Limited, £14.99,
ISBN 978-1783965069

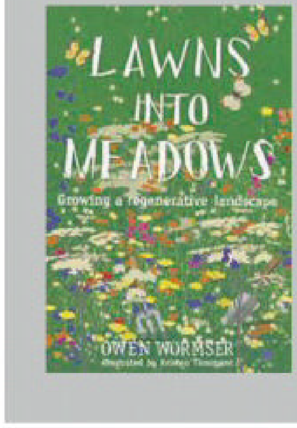
Lev Parikian ventures out on a quest to investigate how we as a nation interact with our natural surroundings, from our back gardens to the countryside.



### FUNGARIUM

by Katie Scott and Ester Gaya for Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,
Big Picture Press, £20,
ISBN 978-1787415355

Beautiful, detailed illustrations of freakish and fantastic fungi are accompanied by expert text from Kew mycologists in this new title.



### LAWNS INTO MEADOWS: GROWING A REGENERATIVE LANDSCAPE

by Owen Wormser, Stone Pier Press, £15.85, ISBN 978-0998862378

Wormser, an American landscape designer, shares his top tips on how to grow a meadow in a range of spaces and terrains.

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By Christopher Woodward

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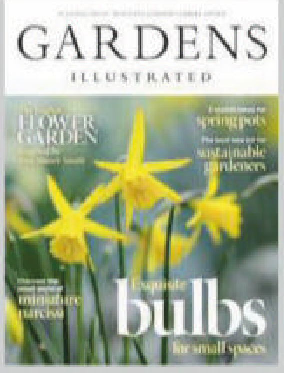

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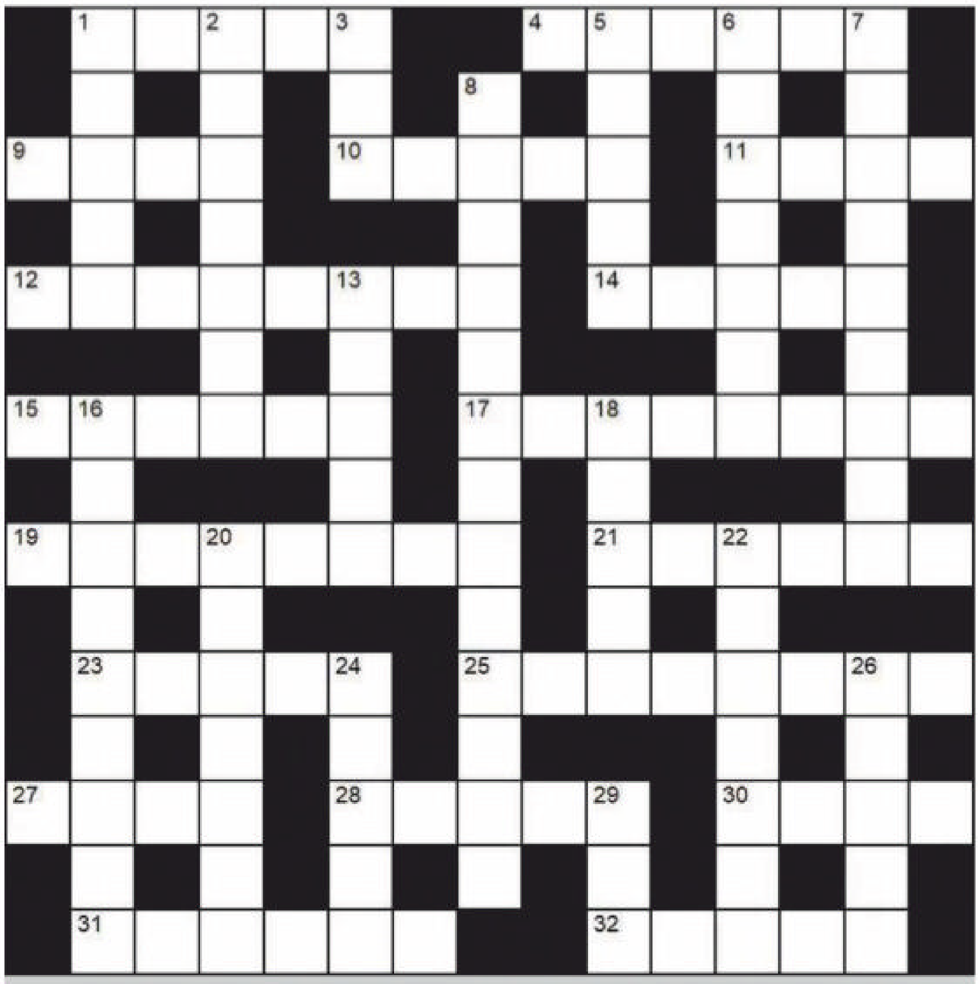
# Crossword



## ACROSS

**1** A common name for tree of eg genus *Thuja* (5)

**4** White-flowering shrub with palmate leaves – arranged as Fiat! (6)

**9** Fungal disease affecting foliage – in citrus trees (4)

**10** Stone fruit of eg cherry, said to hang loosely? (5)

**11** A lily cultivar with mauve-pink bowl-shaped flowers – 'Fable' (4)

**12** *Aesculus hippocastanum* tree, say, that's an old joke? (8)

**14** Cultivar term indicating white (flowers) (5)

**15** Fruit that might follow cherry or plum? (6)

**17** Common name of Cistaceae family of plants (4,4)

**19** See 32 across

**21** A lemon-yellow bearded iris – sort of elm sac (6)

**23** Tupelo tree genus – inside Tiffany's, say (5)

**25** Joseph Banks, for instance, possibly obtains last of plant (8)

**27** Another name for gorse – remove it from within (4)

**28** Any hard-rinded fruit in Cucurbitaceae family (5)

**30** Pod, for example – found in *Lactuca* seedling (4)

**31** Charles finally pins down these garden pests (6)

**32/19** A fritillary that could go to our sovereign's head? (5,8)

## DOWN

**1** Troublesome grass – you might stretch out on it! (5)

**2** Genus of Cretan hemp – cat said to be upset! (7)

**3** Common name for *Solidago canadensis* is Golden __ (3)

**5** Care about a… popular indoor palm *Dypsis lutescens* (5)

**6** Hardy geranium with purple-black flowers – a broom's damaged (7)

**7** Genus of mugwort and wormwood – ie a trim alternative (9)

**8** A scabious cultivar attractive to pollinators – makes flutterer sad (9,4)

**13** I moan about a *Hakonechloa macra* with yellowish leaves, plum colour in autumn (5)

**16** Genus of fragrant shrubs in the olive family – man shouts out (9)

**18** A sturdy snowdrop with long outer segments – Halley's? (5)

**20** A heavy-cropping strawberry – the Spanish Father Christmas? (7)

**22** Genus of cineraria houseplant – produces ie cones (7)

**24** Small pelargonium with pansy-like leaves – partly strange leaves (5)

**26** Common name of *Thunbergia alata* is black-eyed ___ (5)

**29** A dwarf, rose-pink rhododendron – a help to Snow White? (3)

- **Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the September issue**

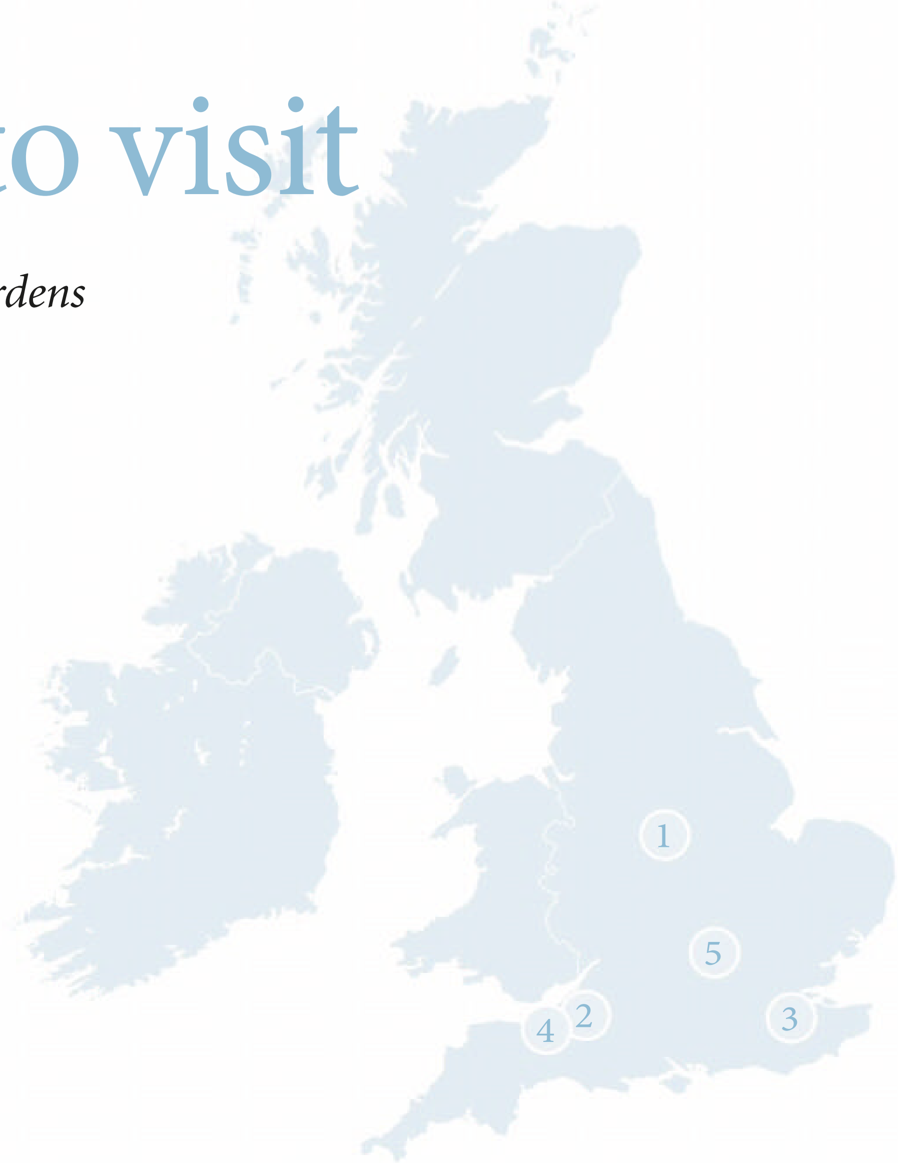
## SOLUTIONS TO THE JULY ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

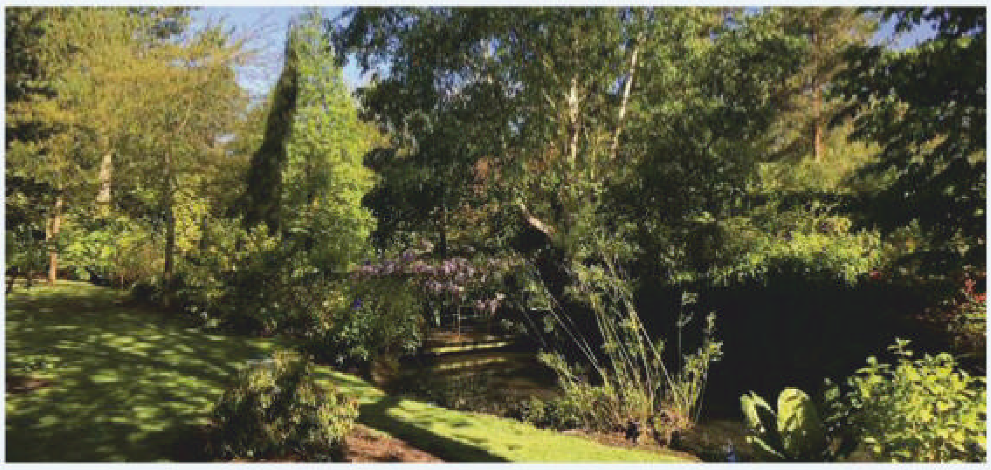
**Across: 1** Bamboo **5** Blossom **9/28** Baby Doll **10** Miami 11 Peas **12** Sputnik **13** Anchor **15** Cuphea **17** The First **18** Celmisia **22** Alisma **23** Pierrot **25** Tree **27** Tends **30** Acaenas **31** Atropa.

**Down: 2** Ada **3** Bayou **4** Osmunda **5/21A** Blanket flower **6** Olivade **7** Sap **8** Meadowsweet **12** Scutellaria **14** Cairo **16** Humus **19** Spartan **20** Alpines **21** Freesia **24** Radar **26** Eva **29** Lop.

# Summer gardens to visit

*Summer is a great time to visit this collection of stunning gardens*





## 1 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM AND NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb summer flowers and foliage! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

**Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com**

## 2 THE BISHOP'S PALACE & GARDENS, WELLS

Over 14 acres of tranquil and spectacular RHS Partner Gardens, including picturesque, romantic, formal and Victorian styles, a wildflower arboretum, specimen trees, Quiet and Community Gardens alongside waterfalls, a moat with resident swans and a stunning medieval palace. Covid-secure measures in place.

**Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD | 01749 98811 | bishopspalace.org.uk**

## 3 HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Running along the outer wall of the Italian Garden, Faith's Garden provides an impressive 1,200 square metres of perennials and a riot of colour in the form of verbenas, grasses, crocosmias and rudbeckias. Glimpse sculptures through doorways and walk among the echinacea and agapanthus.

**Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG | 01732 865 224 | hevercastle.co.uk**

## 4 HESTERCOMBE GARDENS

In the summertime, Hestercombe Gardens is an absolute must see. Often referred to as the 'jewel in Somerset's crown' and the 'gateway to the Quantocks', Hestercombe's formal gardens, designed by Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens, are at their most colourful, sumptuous best.

**Taunton, Somerset TA2 8LQ | 01823 413923 | hestercombe.com**

## 5 WATERPERRY GARDENS

The gardens are ablaze with colour over the long summer days. Heading the way are lupins and roses followed by delphiniums within the world famous herbaceous border. Waterperry Gardens a place to explore, relax and shop in beautiful surroundings all year round.

**Nr Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1LA | 01844 339226 | waterperrygardens.co.uk**

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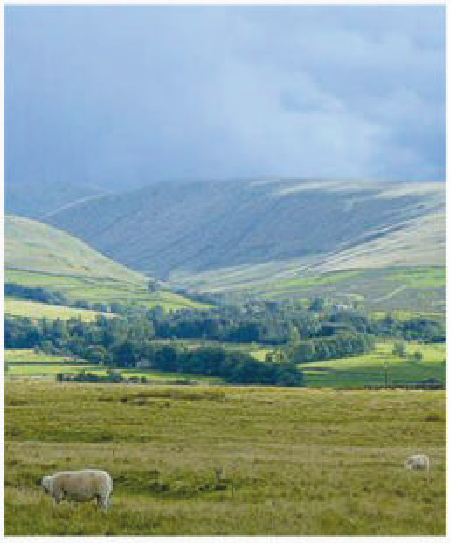

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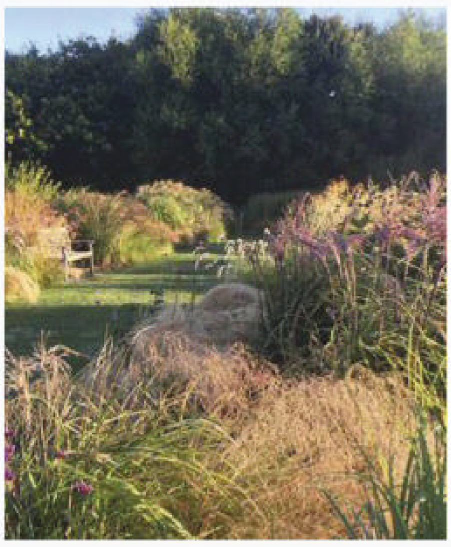

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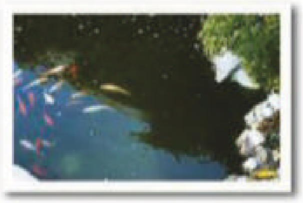

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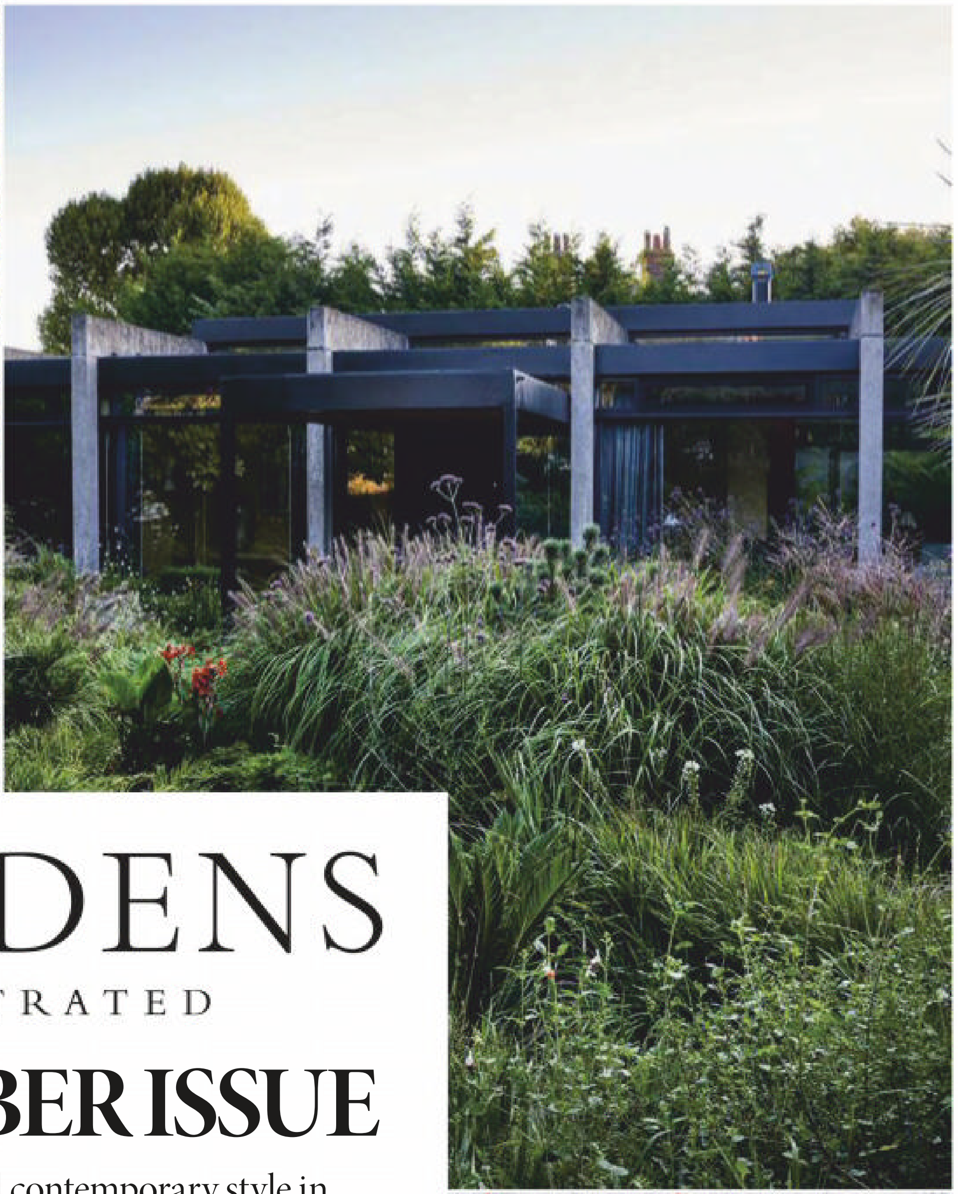

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- A joyfully eclectic garden surrounding a renovated modernist house in southwest London
- Brilliant ideas for container planting that will make the most of early autumn's colour palette
- The best anemones from Scotland's Elizabeth MacGregor Nursery

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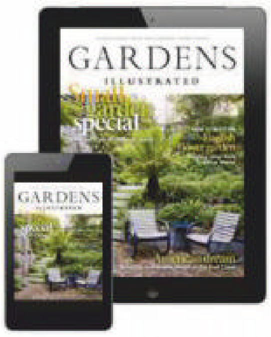

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HOUSEPLANTS

# *Prayer plants*

## Prayer plants are the perfect choice for darker rooms, but keep a magnifying glass to hand

WORDS **JANE PERRONE** ILLUSTRATION **PATRICK MORGAN**

I'm often asked whether my dream is to open a shop selling houseplants, and the answer is always an emphatic no. I'd find it too hard to hand over plants without giving the purchaser a rather too intense grilling to make sure they weren't playing fast and loose with the watering can. I'd also require anyone buying a plant from the prayer plant family to invest in a botanist's hand lens.

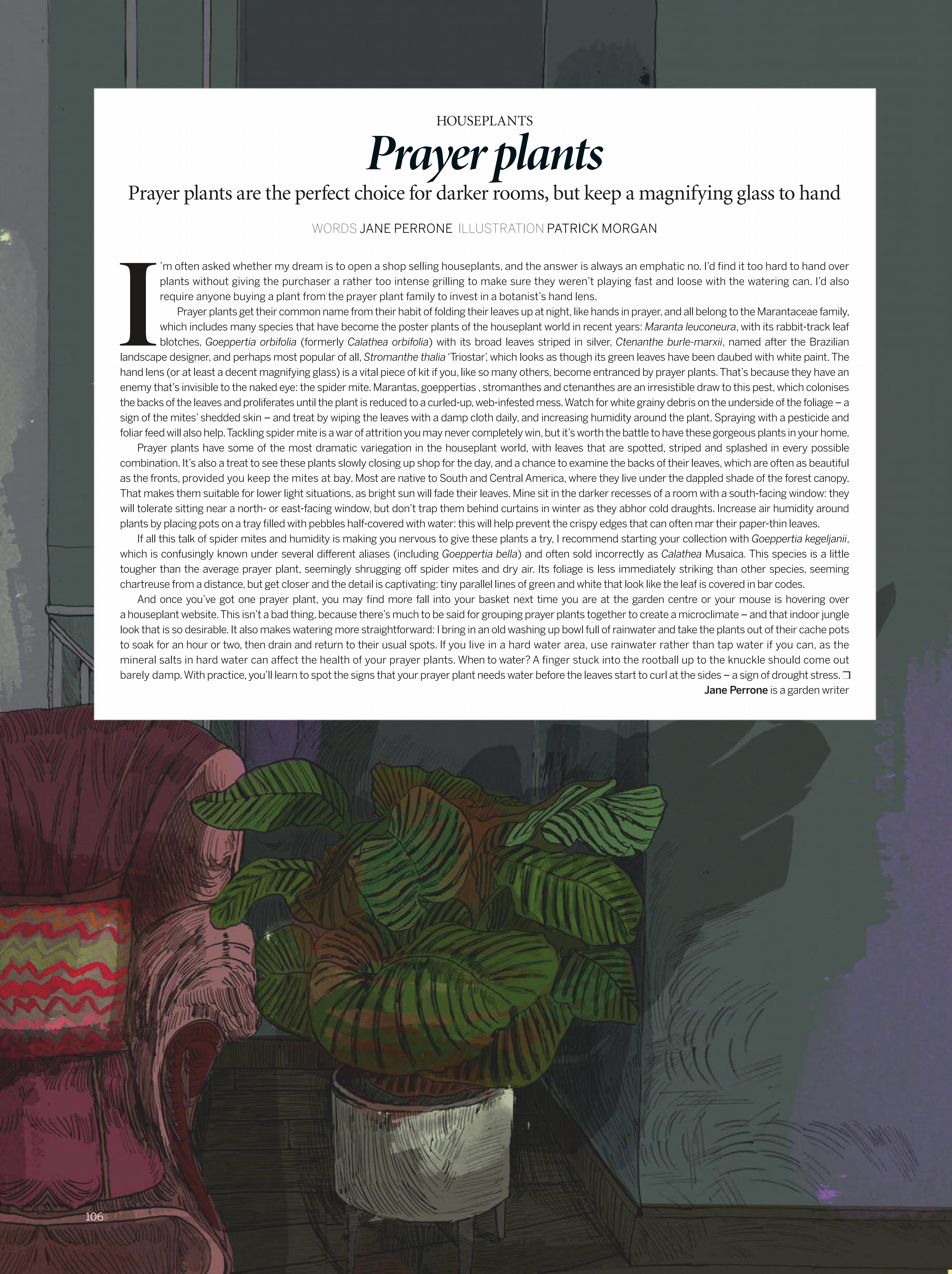
Prayer plants get their common name from their habit of folding their leaves up at night, like hands in prayer, and all belong to the Marantaceae family, which includes many species that have become the poster plants of the houseplant world in recent years: *Maranta leuconeura*, with its rabbit-track leaf blotches, *Goeppertia orbifolia* (formerly *Calathea orbifolia*) with its broad leaves striped in silver, *Ctenanthe burle-marxii*, named after the Brazilian landscape designer, and perhaps most popular of all, *Stromanthe thalia* 'Triostar', which looks as though its green leaves have been daubed with white paint. The hand lens (or at least a decent magnifying glass) is a vital piece of kit if you, like so many others, become entranced by prayer plants. That's because they have an enemy that's invisible to the naked eye: the spider mite. Marantas, goeppertias , stromanthes and ctenanthes are an irresistible draw to this pest, which colonises the backs of the leaves and proliferates until the plant is reduced to a curled-up, web-infested mess. Watch for white grainy debris on the underside of the foliage – a sign of the mites' shedded skin – and treat by wiping the leaves with a damp cloth daily, and increasing humidity around the plant. Spraying with a pesticide and foliar feed will also help. Tackling spider mite is a war of attrition you may never completely win, but it's worth the battle to have these gorgeous plants in your home.

Prayer plants have some of the most dramatic variegation in the houseplant world, with leaves that are spotted, striped and splashed in every possible combination. It's also a treat to see these plants slowly closing up shop for the day, and a chance to examine the backs of their leaves, which are often as beautiful as the fronts, provided you keep the mites at bay. Most are native to South and Central America, where they live under the dappled shade of the forest canopy. That makes them suitable for lower light situations, as bright sun will fade their leaves. Mine sit in the darker recesses of a room with a south-facing window: they will tolerate sitting near a north- or east-facing window, but don't trap them behind curtains in winter as they abhor cold draughts. Increase air humidity around plants by placing pots on a tray filled with pebbles half-covered with water: this will help prevent the crispy edges that can often mar their paper-thin leaves.

If all this talk of spider mites and humidity is making you nervous to give these plants a try, I recommend starting your collection with *Goeppertia kegeljanii*, which is confusingly known under several different aliases (including *Goeppertia bella*) and often sold incorrectly as *Calathea* Musaica. This species is a little tougher than the average prayer plant, seemingly shrugging off spider mites and dry air. Its foliage is less immediately striking than other species, seeming chartreuse from a distance, but get closer and the detail is captivating: tiny parallel lines of green and white that look like the leaf is covered in bar codes.

And once you've got one prayer plant, you may find more fall into your basket next time you are at the garden centre or your mouse is hovering over a houseplant website. This isn't a bad thing, because there's much to be said for grouping prayer plants together to create a microclimate – and that indoor jungle look that is so desirable. It also makes watering more straightforward: I bring in an old washing up bowl full of rainwater and take the plants out of their cache pots to soak for an hour or two, then drain and return to their usual spots. If you live in a hard water area, use rainwater rather than tap water if you can, as the mineral salts in hard water can affect the health of your prayer plants. When to water? A finger stuck into the rootball up to the knuckle should come out barely damp. With practice, you'll learn to spot the signs that your prayer plant needs water before the leaves start to curl at the sides – a sign of drought stress. ❐

**Jane Perrone** is a garden writer



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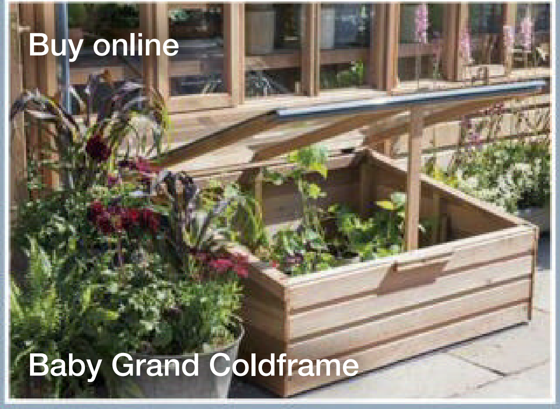

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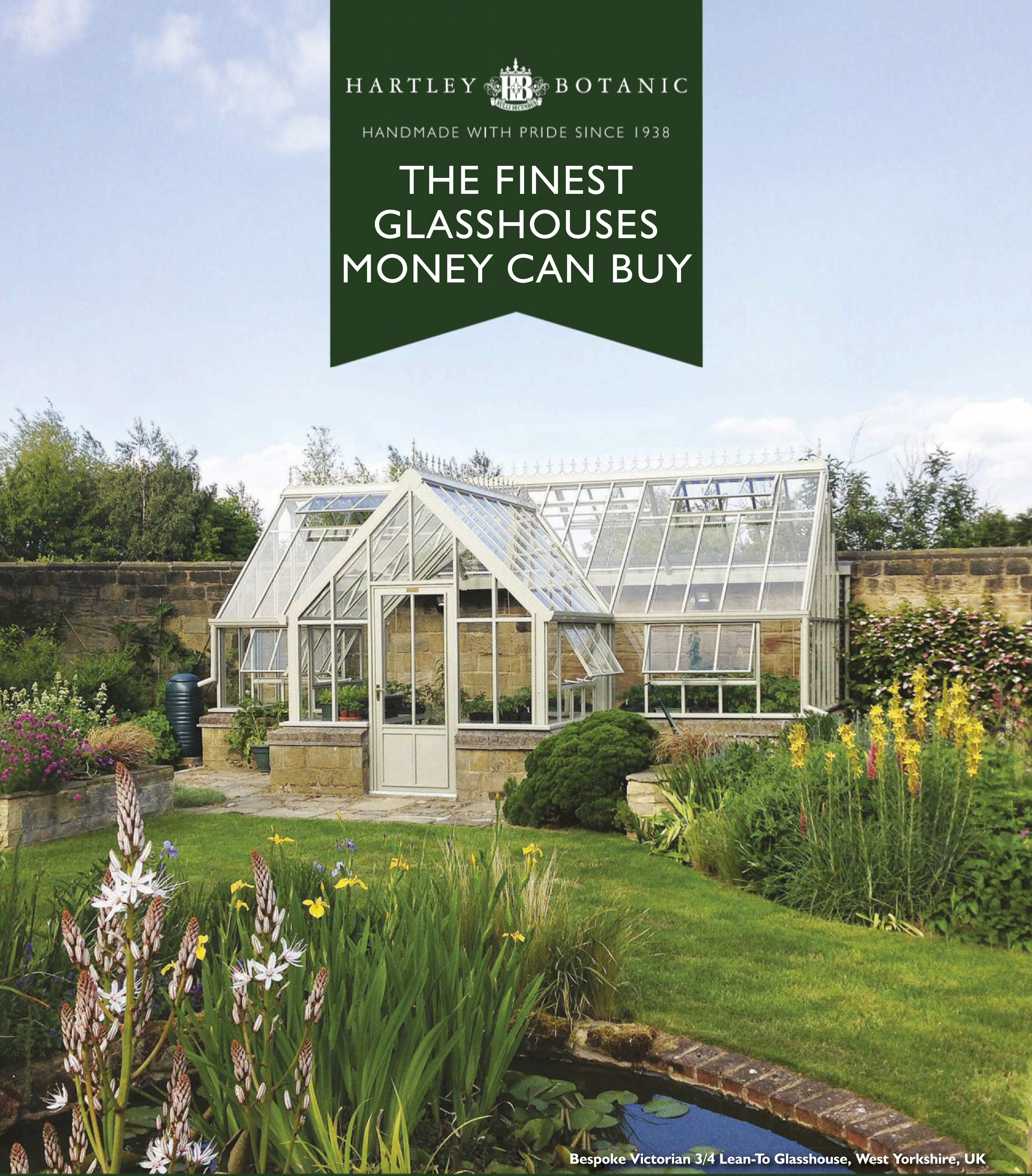

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